















THE EARTHQUAKE



# THE EARTHQUAKE

BY

ARTHUR TRAIN

"The End of worldly life awaits us all:  
Let him who may, gain honor ere death."

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

NEW YORK :: :: 1918

*copy 2*

12-13  
T.T.  
copy

COPYRIGHT, 1918, BY  
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

Published March, 1918

COPYRIGHT, 1917, 1918, BY THE CURTIS PUBLISHING CO.

0

MAR 19 1918



1.50  
©CLA 492626

TO  
ARTHUR WOODS

A PATRIOTIC CITIZEN WHO AS  
COMMISSIONER OF POLICE OF NEW YORK CITY  
1914-1917

REALIZED THE HIGHEST IDEALS OF

PUBLIC SERVICE

THIS BOOK IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED





## CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. MYSELF—JOHN STANTON . . . . .	3
II. MY HOUSEHOLD . . . . .	46
III. MY FRIENDS . . . . .	81
IV. MY WIFE AND OTHERS . . . . .	121
V. MY DAUGHTER . . . . .	162
VI. MY SOLDIER SON . . . . .	175
VII. WHY JACK HAS GONE . . . . .	214
VIII. "OF SHOES—OF SHIPS—OF SEALING- WAX—" . . . . .	236
IX. WHAT THE WAR HAS DONE FOR US . . . . .	276



# THE EARTHQUAKE

“And, behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and broke in pieces the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake: and after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice.”

“And the Lord said unto him: ‘. . . And it shall come to pass, that him that escapeth the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay: and him that escapeth from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay. Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him.’”—I Kings xix, 11-19.

# THE EARTHQUAKE

## I

### MYSELF—JOHN STANTON

Rip Van Winkle was no less in touch with affairs in the valley of the Hudson on his return home after his twenty years' sleep among the Catskills than my wife, my daughter, and myself were with those of these United States when we descended from our sleeper to the upper platform of the Grand Central Station upon our return to New York City in the autumn of 1917. In many respects, allowing for the greater velocity of life in the twentieth century, our cases were not dissimilar. For ten months, under a doctor's orders, we had wandered in the Orient, and returned home to find ourselves in what was presently to prove a new world.

I had been a fairly prosperous bond merchant, the junior partner in a well-connected and reputable Wall Street house; not one of the Grecian-temple variety, with pillars of Carrara and floors of onyx and jasper, but a modest establishment up one flight, where we did a legitimate business in strictly investment secur-

## THE EARTHQUAKE

ities, dividing among the three of us a yearly net profit of approximately forty thousand dollars. Morris, Lord & Stanton is our firm name, and I was and still am the Stanton—John Stanton, A.B., Harvard '86.

If you care, now or later, to take the trouble to look me up in "Who's Who" you will learn that the author of these memoirs was born in Worcester, Massachusetts, December 23, 1865; the son of John Adams Stanton, a banker of that place, and Mary Stuart Thayer, his wife; that he attended the schools of his native city and afterward St. Paul's, at Concord, New Hampshire; graduated in due course from Harvard as above; went into business in New York City; married Helen Morris—the sister of his present partner—on April 30, 1887; is the father of two children and the author of "Bonds Versus Stocks—a Handbook for Investors," a "History of American Stock Exchanges," and "American Railroad Securities." In my capacity as my own biographer I also included in the personal sketch with which I furnished the editors of that interesting publication the valuable information that I was a Republican, an Episcopalian, and had "never as yet held public office."

That was the history of the John Stanton who shook the dust of Wall Street from his feet toward the end of the year 1916 to seek health in regions beyond the reach of the telephone and the daily newspaper. Sometimes I am inclined to feel that the life of that

## MYSELF—JOHN STANTON

particular John Stanton ended there and then. At any rate, if he still lives he is, in fact, another and different man. The first followed a soft, ease-loving, thoughtless sort of life, content to go with the crowd, spending his money as freely as he made it, running to seed spiritually and intellectually, his only ambition being to build up so extensive a business that he could retire at the earliest possible moment and amuse himself—presumably as much as possible at the watering-places of continental Europe.

To-day— Well, it is the other and I trust the better John Stanton who writes these pages. Indeed, I not only view my ten months in the Pacific as a long sleep, but I account the whole fifty-two previous years of my life as no less spent in dreaming—the dreaming of the materialistic, essentially selfish, if good-natured, American business man, the dreamer of full-fed dreams. It was only when I stepped out of that transcontinental train that I began to wake up. It was only then that I felt the first faint anticipatory quiver of the shock I was soon to get—the shock of the earthquake that in the next thirty days was to set my brain to reeling, to turn my domestic existence topsyturvy, and to leave me clutching at my heart with weak and trembling hands.

The year 1915 had seen munition and industrial stocks generally rocketing starward; bonds had been strong and trade brisk. We at the office gave the

## THE EARTHQUAKE

war, at most, two years to run and capitalized our profits with the rest of the Street.

The demand for ships of wood and iron, for copper, steel, dyes, and machinery was beyond anything hitherto known or imagined. To own a steamboat or a foundry was to be a millionaire. One of our clients had a steel-rolling mill out in Ohio and another in New Jersey. He wanted to get hold of half a dozen more and have a merger. Nothing loath, I undertook the job. For five months I slaved day and night, sleeping most of the time on trains, paying no attention to what I ate, my mind concentrated upon a single object—to float the Phœnicia Steel Company. The papers were just ready to be signed when the “peace leak” nearly wrecked the whole enterprise. For two days it looked as though my merger would never merge, as though my eggs would never scramble; and then, the excitement having subsided, the respective treasurers affixed their signatures to the necessary documents, shook hands with one another, and it was done.

That afternoon I sat limp in a leather armchair in Frank Brewer’s office and heard my doom from the stern lips of New York’s leading nerve specialist.

“Stanton,” he exclaimed impatiently, “you’ve just missed a complete breakdown! Twenty-four hours more and I’d have had to order you to a sanatorium. You’ve got to quit right here and now, give up your



## MYSELF—JOHN STANTON

business entirely and go away for a year. No; don't call up your office! You'll do exactly what I tell you or I won't be responsible for consequences. I'll see both your partners—they're old friends of mine. Now go up to the club and take a Turkish bath and a rub. Then drink a pint of champagne and go to sleep. I don't want you to go home. I'll call to see you during the evening."

I did as I was told, including the champagne. Strange to say, I slept. At nine o'clock I woke to find Dr. Brewer and my two partners at my side.

"It's all fixed!" said Morris gently. "I've told Helen she must get ready to leave New York on Saturday."

"But—" I protested dizzily. "There's Margery."

"Ought to be glad to get her out of New York!" snapped Brewer. "No eighteen-year-old girl has any business here!"

"And she says she's crazy to go to Japan!" added Lord with a grin.

"Japan!"

"And, by the way," continued my brother-in-law, "Tom Blanchard happened to be in the office when Brewer telephoned this afternoon, and he said he wasn't going back to his place in Hawaii again this year, and that he'd be glad to have you go there and stay—all of you—as long as you want. It's a sugar-plantation, you know—smiling, brown-skinned na-

## THE EARTHQUAKE

tives, hammocks, hula-hula girls, and all that sort of thing!"

"Yes," I nodded. "'On the Beach at Waikiki'—I know! You fellows seem to have mapped out my whole future life for me. Well, if you've squared it with Helen and got her to agree to separate her sub-débutante daughter from the follies of 1916, I'll go you—to Japan or Java or Jerusalem, for as long as you say, and a day longer!"

And so I went.

My wife, Helen, my daughter, Margery, and I sailed on the Canadian Pacific Steamship *Empress of China* on December 19, 1916, for the Far East, where our travels, our impressions, and our adventures have nothing whatever to do with the purposes of this narrative.

On the steamer the Canadians and English aboard would have nothing to do with us. Even in the usually friendly atmosphere of the smoking-room I was left to myself, except for a couple of compatriots who agreed with me that American stock with the Allies had gone down badly. Indeed, certain passengers, especially the Canadians, took pains to air their uncomplimentary views of the people of the United States in tones obviously intended to be overheard.

Altogether, I was glad when we got to Yokohama,

## MYSELF—JOHN STANTON

and so far as Japan was concerned, I observed personally none of the popular hostility to things American I had been led to believe existed there from my reading of newspapers and magazines in the United States.

After two delightful weeks we took ship from Nagasaki for Manila, where I chartered a government revenue steamer and cruised for six weeks more in the archipelago, visiting some islands where the natives had never before seen an American or even a white man, though owing allegiance to the United States. It was the trip of my life, and, in addition to the small arsenal of head-axes and war-knives lying at the other end of the table upon which I am writing, I carried away with me the emblem of the Sacred Turtle tattooed upon my tummy—which proves, to those who know, that I am blood brother of José Aguinaldo Péjaros and a subchieftain of a tribe with an unpronounceable name, whose members for ugliness leave nothing to be desired.

During this period we received no mail and saw no newspapers, these last, before we left, having been pronounced anathema by Brewer.

“Whatever you do, don’t look at a paper for three months!” he had ordered; and I had humbly promised to obey. Indeed, it was no burden to carry out his injunction. I could not have done otherwise—there were no papers to read. In Manila, of course, we

## THE EARTHQUAKE

had been in touch for about forty-eight hours with our native land, long enough to bring our war news roughly up to date and to glance over President Wilson's Message of January 22d. As for our going into the war, the idea seemed to me at that time utterly preposterous. I hadn't believed that anything could drive us in, or that, even if we went in, anything would come of it. In Japan, Manila, and Honolulu it seemed to be assumed that there was no real intention on the part of our government to do more than make enough of a demonstration to save the national face.

I confess that, so far as I was concerned, there wasn't any national face left. To my mind, the President had been stalling from the outset. The "Peace Without Victory" speech, which we got, as I have said, at Manila, finished it for me. It was all very noble, very magnanimous, very benign, and very highfalutin, I thought. We were just fixing things up so as to be on the right side of everybody after the war was over. Mr. Wilson had said: "Victory would mean peace forced upon the loser, a victor's terms imposed upon the vanquished. It would be accepted in humiliation, under duress, at an intolerable sacrifice, and would leave a sting, a resentment, a bitter memory, upon which terms of peace would rest—not permanently, but only as upon quicksand."

Fine, I said, if we were dealing with a government

## MYSELF—JOHN STANTON

that didn't countenance, if not order, the cutting off of women's breasts, the poisoning of wells, the drowning of babes in arms with their mothers, the violation of young and innocent girls! But you might as well consider the feelings of a ruffian who had debauched your daughter and refrain from locking him up because his confinement in jail "would be accepted in humiliation, under duress, at an intolerable sacrifice, and would leave a sting, a resentment, a bitter memory" after he finally got out. That was how I felt about it.

The President's speech of February 3, 1917, delivered upon the severance of relations with Germany—which we picked up in Mindanao—had cheered me somewhat. That, I admitted, looked more like business. But I felt by no means sure that it was not put forth with a belief almost approaching certainty that the German Government would back down; and if it backed down I knew we should never go to war. The sentence "We are the sincere friends of the German people and earnestly desire to remain at peace with the government which speaks for them" bore an olive-branch that I expected would herald the return of Bernstorff.

Of course I know better to-day; for we all are aware now of what Mr. Wilson knew then—what Germany had been doing here in the way of distributing blood-money and hiring criminals, and of what the Kaiser

## THE EARTHQUAKE

and his ministers had planned and even threatened against the United States.

Even if finally we actually declared war, I did not believe that that act would have any concrete result. We were entirely unprepared, and the war would be over long before we could send a properly trained and adequately armed body of troops to Europe. I figured the thing out in about the same way the German General Staff had figured it out. Nobody wanted war except a few jingoes in the East; free Americans would never stand for conscription, and our entry would have no effect except to divert back into the United States the tide of munitions flowing steadily to England and France. To that extent Germany would actually profit by our action.

We were visiting a native village, I remember, in one of the coral islands the first week in April when the captain of our revenue cutter picked up the news by wireless from Manila that the President had proclaimed a state of war between the United States and the Imperial German Government. Naturally, the news occasioned a good deal of excitement on the steamer and the captain dressed ship and fired a salute, which sent the natives scurrying to the woods. Helen's first thought, of course, was of our son, a junior at Harvard. Looking at me a little anxiously, she said:

“Jack's not old enough to go, is he?”

## MYSELF—JOHN STANTON

"Oh, no!" I answered resolutely. "Jack's only a boy at college. Besides, the war will be over long before we can send any troops across. They'd send the regular army first, anyhow."

I told her that quite sincerely. It never dawned upon me to think otherwise. Jack was a kid. He didn't have sense enough to change his shoes after he had been out in the rain. Only a year or so ago I had had to stand over him with a club to make him brush his teeth, and he had hated a bath just as much as the devil is supposed to hate consecrated water.

"Oh, no!" I reassured her. "You don't need to worry a single minute about Jack. He might go to the next war, but he'll get no chance at this."

And so we steamed on among the islands, under cloudless skies, reading novels and playing bridge, until, six weeks later, we again reached Manila and regretfully bade farewell to our captain.

From Manila we took a steamer for Honolulu, and a week later arrived by coasting vessel at Ilao, where Tom Blanchard's sugar-factory is situated, and began our lotos-eating life on the plantation. There for several months we led the existence commonly referred to as idyllic, keeping no hours, sleeping fourteen out of the twenty-four when we chose, swimming in crystalline water inside the reefs, fishing for rainbow-hued pauu and hilu outside the islands, and waited upon hand and foot by impassive Chinese servants,



## THE EARTHQUAKE

who anticipated every thought we either had or should have had.

The bungalow was half a mile from the sugar-factory, on the other side of a point, and had its own dock. There was no telegraph; we had no neighbors; and there was no one to speak to except a taciturn superintendent, who looked like an ex-convict and who lived with a half-caste wife named Mo-a. Once a week a small steamer dropped a bag of mail at our landing, including a bundle of morning, evening, and Sunday New York papers about as big as a hog's head.

At first we used to rush down to the jetty and tear off the wrappers before the Chink could bring them up to the veranda—just couldn't wait! We wanted to know exactly what the government was doing; how many hundred yards the French and English had gained from the boches since the week before; how much nearer Cadorna was to Trieste; and whether the Czar had been put at peeling potatoes or wheeling a barrow. Gradually, however, we lost interest. It took all the joy out of life to spend whole days waist-high in newspapers—all alike and full of vain repetitions—trying to arrange the stuff in its proper sequence. When you get about forty newspapers at once there is a striking monotony, even about war news.

Finally we reached the point when we couldn't look at them—except for the head-lines. To see my



## MYSELF—JOHN STANTON

namesake, John—Head or Number One Boy—come staggering up the beach with that huge load of brown-wrapped rolls of printed matter on his back filled us with gloom. In the first place, it was all weeks old when it got to us; and then there was so much of it! Stale tons of it! Usually after lying unopened for days, those papers found their way down to Mo-a, who liked to cut out the pictures in the supplements and paste them on the wall of her house with fish-glue that she boiled herself.

I would occasionally find her gazing rapturously at some rotogravure print of George M. Cohan, William Jennings Bryan, or Colonel House, and murmuring "Beau'fu' man!" In ladies she took no interest, and she would look contemptuously at the reproductions of our most brilliant Broadway stars—at Jane Cowl, Billie Burke, or our own Maxine, and shake her head and mutter "No-a-good!"

You see, the atmosphere was somehow antipathetic to intellectual exertion. Our previous New York ideas seemed—how shall I say?—"irrelevant, incompetent, and immaterial." We lived like princes and it cost us only a few cents a day; we couldn't have bought anything even if we had needed it—which we didn't; there was nothing in the world of Ilao to spend a single cent on, and I don't believe that literally there was more than six dollars Mex. in the place.

There was nothing to worry us, no duties to per-

## THE EARTHQUAKE

form, "nowhere to go but out"—and "out" was as near heaven as anything I have ever known. We talked of New York as if it might have been Calcutta. We read of the war, but it did not seem real. We knew that men were suffering and dying, but it was like reading about it years afterward. It was our own daily life there at Ilao that was real to us—the other thing was literary, like our books; so we sat round and read frayed copies out of Blanchard's library—Marion Crawford, Whyte-Melville, William Dean Howells, and others of a bygone literary age. I mention this because now it seems so extraordinary that, with our country at war, we should have been dreaming over "Saracinesca," or "Mr. Isaacs," or "The Rise of Silas Lapham," while the bodies of thousands of our fellow human beings lay rotting out in No Man's Land.

A Wall Street bond broker has no time for dreaming and he has no visions at all; but there at Ilao we dreamed that we were young again, and we had time to wonder why we no longer had any visions. And sometimes, though I missed, in a way, the activity of New York, the complex interests of work and amusement, our hundreds of friends and the excitement of the game, I told myself that now, for the first time, in this distant place, with none of my own kind about except my wife and daughter, I was in a position to estimate the real value of the sort of life I had worked so hard to live. Was it, I asked myself, worth the

## MYSELF—JOHN STANTON

candle? After all, did I get anything out of it—at a thousand times the cost—better than I got out of life at Ilao?

A bombshell fell among us one day, however, which shattered our dreaming. It had been arranged that after his spring examinations Jack should join us; and, now that July had come, we were daily expecting a letter containing the news that he had started West and giving us the approximate date of his arrival. I had been out with one of the Chinamen fishing for hilu when I saw the steamer rounding the headland. As she was several hours ahead of time and there was no one at the landing, we rowed over to meet her. The captain, a red-faced sea-dog, with watery eyes, was standing on the bridge.

“Hello!” I shouted. “What’s the news?”

He mopped his forehead with a yellow madras handkerchief and regarded me thoughtfully. I was a perennial object of curiosity to him.

“They’ve put through conscription,” he answered hoarsely, “and sold a couple of billion dollars’ bond issue. Looks like Uncle Sam meant business—after all,” he added.

Sitting in my pongee suit in that flimsy fishing-boat, rising and falling with my Chinaman in the wash of that stinking coasting steamer, the significance of what he said did not get across to me. Ilao would be just the same, no matter how many conscripts might be drafted or how many billions were raised through

## THE EARTHQUAKE

bond issues or otherwise. That same wilting sun would blaze down on that same sagging old jetty, covered with its loose ends of hemp and its empty hogsheads; the same stoical Chinaman would plod down to meet the weekly steamer; and from the settlement behind the point the same softly crooned songs would rise under the moonlight to the sad wail of the ukulele.

"Sure!" I retorted. "What'd you expect?"

The captain did not answer my question. He probably had had no expectations in the matter.

"Here's a letter for you!" he called down, taking it from inside his cap. He passed it to a deck-hand, who relayed it over the side to me. "Look out there!" he warned us, as he gave the jingle, and the steamer, which had not made fast, began to back out.

The Chink pulled a few strokes away, while I lit a cigarette and watched the old tub back nearly into the coral reef, swing her nose round, and head for the open sea. Then the jingle rang again, her propeller thrashed the water like a hippo taking a mud-bath, and she spurted ahead into the rollers.

"An' a hundred million for the Red Cross!" bel-  
lowed the captain across the intervening waves. "I forgot that!"

"Red Cross!"—that was pretty fine, I thought. Then I looked at the handwriting on the envelope, saw that it was from Jack, and tore it open.

## MYSELF—JOHN STANTON

*"Dear Dad,"* it ran, in a childish scrawl. "Most of the fellows are going to Plattsburg, so I thought you wouldn't mind if I went along, too. You will be coming home soon, anyhow. If I should be lucky enough to grab off a commission, there wouldn't be any chance of my going abroad for a long time yet. Lots of love to mother and Margery. The weather is ripping!—Aff'ly, JACK."

The boy's letter gave me a mixed feeling of pride and disappointment. I was crazy to see him, of course; but it was quite natural and very creditable that he should want to get some military training. That he would ever actually be an officer in command of men was absurd. He hadn't the remotest idea of discipline.

Well, Plattsburg was a good thing for the health, anyhow, and I didn't blame him for wanting to go along with the rest of his friends. Nevertheless, the letter did not rest easily in my pocket as I trudged across the beach to the bungalow where Helen was reading in the hammock. I tossed it into her lap, without comment, and she gave a little cry of joy. When she had read it, however, she lifted a white face to me and said simply:

"Oh, John! Let's go home!"

Our trip back was smooth and uneventful. Gradually we gathered up the threads of what had been

## THE EARTHQUAKE

going on in our absence and came to realize that the United States had gone into the war in earnest; but Europe seemed a long way off and it did not occur to us that our own lives would be made in any way different by what had occurred. My health was now completely re-established and we were all tanned as brown as native islanders.

In Frisco we saw plenty of young fellows in khaki, and occasionally, on our way across the continent, passed a troop train upon a siding jammed with ruddy lads, who waved to us out of car-windows over white-painted inscriptions of "Can the Kaiser!" or "Berlin or Bust!" or "Potsdam Express!" But, in spite of what we read in the papers and the magazines, all of which we bought, in spite of the officers in uniform and the printed admonitions from Mr. Hoover, placed so conspicuously in the dining-car, it did not seem somehow in any way to affect us. We were at war—yes; a lot of men were going over to fight—if peace wasn't declared first; the government was going to raise a stupendous sum of money and had embarked upon a gigantic programme of preparation; but—other people, not we, were doing it!

We were just spectators! It was like seeing a big show at the Hippodrome from excellently chosen seats, or watching a procession on Fifth Avenue from a window. We could go home and to bed whenever we felt like it. Our reaction was that, though we

## MYSELF—JOHN STANTON

should like to get into the game and help, it was all being handled by some one else, and there was really nothing for us to do except to go on living as usual. That was the delusion from which we were suffering when we stepped off the train at the Grand Central Station that bright October morning.

René, our lame French chauffeur, whom we had left on half wages during our absence—"much too good to let go" had been our theory—was waiting for us with a fur lap-robe over his arm on the curb outside the station, and our smart little Renault landaulet, which had just come from the shop, looked almost like new. Our other servants had been sent away and our house on East Seventy-second Street had been left in charge of a caretaker.

"You had better go to the Chatwold for a day or two," I suggested to my wife; "then you can take plenty of time to engage your servants. I think I'll drop down to the office to see how things are going. Probably I'll be up to lunch."

We were back in New York, back in our home town, back in our old lives—that is, we thought we were back to them.

"Where's Morris?" I asked twenty minutes later as I stepped into our private office and shook my partner Lord by the hand.

"Morris?" he repeated, lifting his eyebrows. "Didn't you know? Oh, you probably didn't get my



## THE EARTHQUAKE

letter. Why, your brother-in-law pulled up stakes last week and has gone down to Washington to help McAdoo."

"Gone to Washington!" I repeated blankly. "What's he gone there for? How are we going to get on without him in the business?"

My partner laughed grimly and shrugged his well-tailored shoulders.

"There isn't any business!" he remarked.

I looked at him stupidly.

"How do you mean—no business?" I repeated incredulously.

"Just exactly that—no business at all!" he answered. "Bonds are dead! Everybody is trying to sell 'em, and there aren't any buyers. We haven't paid our expenses for the last six months. There's nothing doing here. So far as business is concerned, you might have stayed away forever. We don't need Morris; we don't need any office force. But we can't send 'em away; it wouldn't be decent. We've just got to make up our minds to it—that's all!"

I sat down, slowly trying to take it all in—to envisage this new Wall Street.

"Aren't there any profits?" I persisted.

"Profits—hell!" he ejaculated. "Say, what's the matter with you? Where do you think you are, anyway? This business is costing us two thousand a month!"



## MYSELF—JOHN STANTON

I got up and walked to the window.

"Where did the money come from you've been sending me?" I demanded.

"Your share of our commissions on the Phoenicia merger," he replied. "Look here, old top, it's time you began to wake up. I suppose we ought to have let you know how things were, but it seemed kinder to let you enjoy yourself."

"To let me dream on," I retorted. "Well, let's hear the rest of it."

"I suppose you know about the income tax?"

"Not much."

"Well, you're soaked three ways—the old 1916 tax, the new 1917 war tax, and the 8 per cent on earnings over six thousand dollars."

"That last won't hurt us much, will it?" Then I burst out laughing. "Do you know, Lord—oh, Lord!—that I've just sent my wife and daughter up to take a suite at the Chatwold?"

He chuckled.

"There's the telephone," he said humorously, pushing it toward me.

"I think I need your help, old man," I replied. "Just sit down here with me—will you?—and figure out what's left."

Lord opened a drawer and pulled out a printed sheet covered with a complicated table of figures. I told him the returns from my private capital, and

## THE EARTHQUAKE

after a comparatively brief calculation he informed me that my income tax would amount to \$3,713.09. I never knew how he got the nine cents. Anyhow, it really didn't matter much. I took the sheet of pad paper on which he had been writing and studied it attentively, with mingled feelings. Then I lifted my pencil and poised it in my hand.

"What have our yearly profits averaged for the last five years—yours and mine?" I asked.

"Twelve thousand apiece," he answered at once.

"Well, I've spent every cent of it; so have you. Add twelve thousand to three thousand and seven hundred"—I did it—"and you get fifteen thousand seven hundred. That's what this blooming old war has done to me already! It's cut my income over fifteen thousand dollars."

"It's done the same to me," said he.

"What are you going to do?" I demanded.

It didn't seem possible. I was almost convinced there must be some trick in the figures—a statistical joke.

"Do? Same as you will—cut down expenses."

"Fifteen thousand dollars? I can't!"

Of course I couldn't! I had been living right up to the top notch on the theory that my income would, if anything, have a slight normal increase year by year. I had my principal, of course; but I had been brought up to view the spending of principal—of invested

## MYSELF—JOHN STANTON

capital—as hardly less than a crime. Still, under the circumstances— Yet, to sell securities meant taking a loss of from twenty to forty points. There wasn't much fun in selling an investment security, in order to raise ten thousand dollars, at a cash loss of four thousand.

“You've got to do it, old man!” Lord said, perceiving what was going on inside my head. “We can't dispose of our firm securities at these prices—we've had to mark 'em down an average of thirty points—and you can't sell yours. You've simply got to change your mode of living. Everybody's doing it. You'll be in excellent company. After all, it's our contribution to the war! I don't mind so much. It's nothing to freezing in the trenches. We can't be stingy with our dollars when other fellows are giving their lives, can we?”

“You're right,” I agreed. “But if you can spare me I guess I'll hike along up-town. My wife might buy a fur coat or something!”

My pet stenographer, Miss Peterson, who, in spite of her halo of bronze-colored hair, is the most efficient young woman I have ever had the good fortune to meet, had always attended to my personal accounts; so well, in fact, that I had rarely given them any attention. Now I rang for her and asked her to make me out an itemized statement setting forth my average yearly expenditures for the past five years.

## THE EARTHQUAKE

To my surprise I discovered that she had already done so.

"Mr. Morris and Mr. Lord both had to go over their accounts, so I assumed that you would probably wish to," she said with a smile.

I stuffed the envelope into my pocket without daring to look at it, and moved toward the door.

"I'll be down as usual in the morning," I said to Lord.

"Not necessary at all!" he retorted. "I advise you to stay up-town and take an account of stock. I won't expect you until next Monday; and you needn't show up then if there's anything you'd rather do."

I started to take a taxi, recoiled, and descended to the Subway. While shooting up-town I surreptitiously examined Miss Peterson's schedule:

1912.....	\$39,390.55	1915.....	\$41,245.01
1913.....	40,834.77	1916.....	43,871.16
1914.....	40,992.80	1917 (9 mos.)...	39,656.10

These totals were neatly itemized under various general headings—such as Rent, Taxes, Supplies, Motor, Mrs. Stanton, Servants, Travel, Charity, Miss Margery, Repairs, Furnishings, Medical, Light and Heat, and so on. It made me almost sick to look at the thing. It was preposterous!

"1916—Mr. Stanton—\$3,714.27," for instance! How on earth could I have spent any such sum on

## MYSELF—JOHN STANTON

myself? Mentally I reviewed my disbursements of the preceding year. Yes; I had joined the Riding Club at an expense, including the initiation fee, of \$400, and I had ordered my usual number of overcoats and suits at an average of \$90 each. My club dues had come to \$670 and my club bills to \$443.20. There were also sundry items camouflaged on my stubs under the mystic symbol of "Pk," which stood for poker losses. The amount of these shall remain undisclosed for the sake of posterity. On the whole, the \$3,714.27 was pretty well explained.

I found my wife lunching in the sunlit private suite at the Chatwold she had engaged to tide us over temporarily until she could secure her staff of servants.

"Sit down," she said. "The waiter will be back presently. What will you have—poulet en casserole or salmis of Long Island duckling? The *salade russe* is delicious."

"I'll have a roast-beef sandwich and a cup of coffee," I answered shortly. "Look here, Helen; just make the most of that poulet en casserole. I hate to break it to you—but this is no place for us!"

"Why, John!" she exclaimed. "What is the matter? Have we lost money?"

"Don't you know that we are at war?"

"Of course! What are you going to do—buy Liberty Bonds?"

I laughed a hollow laugh.

## THE EARTHQUAKE

"No! We're busted—that is, we're fifteen thousand dollars a year poorer than when we left New York; and that comes pretty close to busting us—living as we do."

She looked at me wearily. She seemed very tired. I had expected some sort of outburst, but nothing of the sort occurred.

"How much have we got left?" she inquired vaguely after a pause.

"Oh, something over twenty-five thousand dollars a year," I answered.

I confess I had looked forward to this disclosure with apprehension verging on panic. I was still exactly as much in love with Helen as the day she had become my wife; we were perhaps the happiest married couple I knew. The only thing that ever came between us, that in any way detracted from our complete sympathy, was that sometimes I felt that she expended her intellect upon objects unworthy of her. These objects were chiefly concerned with the material comfort of her existence—the polish on the machinery of her life.

It seemed to me that the polish had taken on for her a greater importance than the machinery. She was preoccupied with appearances. Everything in the house always had to look exactly as if it were new. There were always painters and upholsterers about, and my bills for repairs never were less than a thousand dollars a year. Our house was a pattern

## MYSELF—JOHN STANTON

of luxury and taste. Our servants were models of dexterity and neatness. Our cooks were inevitably mistresses of the culinary art. Our life ran as if on ball bearings, without a sound, without a hitch. Seven people could have their breakfasts in bed without causing the slightest disarrangement in our ménage. Our friends said Helen was a wonderful housekeeper. I thought she was just a wonderful little spender.

Our automobile was exquisite. René always looked as if he had just stepped out of a show-case, and the motor was done over every year. Helen didn't seem to have any time for the things she and I had regarded as important when we were engaged. I regarded her as ease-loving—trifling, superficial.

I see now that I was wrong—at least to the extent of thinking that it was Helen's real character to be like that. It was rather that she had simply let herself go with the current and taken non-essentials seriously because the rest of her friends did so. Her trouble was not individual; it was endemic. And it was allied to ophthalmia. So I had anticipated tears, if not a scene, when she should learn our situation. She looked a little worried, it is true; but she did not protest.

"I suppose it will mean giving up the motor—and our house?"

I nodded.

## THE EARTHQUAKE

"It does seem too bad to have to lose René," she murmured. "And the car ran too beautifully this morning!" she added wistfully. "However, I should think anybody ought to be able to get along on twenty-five thousand dollars a year in war time. I want to live as well as I can, but I don't want to live any better. If that's all we've got we'll have to manage. I'm sorry for Margery, though."

I had been thinking of Margery myself. She was in every way a charming girl, and her mother had for years looked forward to bringing her out in society with the customary New York display. Poor Margery! There would be mighty little chance for magnificence on our reduced income.

At that precise moment, however, I was not thinking of Margery, but of my supposedly ease-loving wife. In place of making an indignant outburst, she sat there quite calmly, agreeing without a moment's hesitation to readjust her entire scale of life. Poor dear! I thought. She didn't know what it was going to involve. What real sacrifices she would be called upon to make, habituated as she was to luxury! But, whether she knew or not, she was a brave woman and I admired her as I never had before.

"Darling!" I exclaimed, putting my arm about her, for the waiter had not returned. "You're a real little brick—the real stuff! I didn't care for myself—only for you."



## MYSELF—JOHN STANTON

She suddenly threw her arms about my neck and burst into tears.

"Oh, John!" she sobbed. "I don't care how I live. We started on nothing and we never have been happier than we were in our first little flat; but—I didn't tell you before—I didn't want to until you'd had your lunch!—but— Oh, John, I'm frightened to death about Jack!"

"Why?" I choked, startled at her tone. "What about Jack?"

She picked up a newspaper that was lying beside her and pointed to an item on the back sheet; then turned away her head.

"Gallant ——th to sail for France next week," I read through blurred eyes. "So rapid has been the improvement in the condition and training of the ——th Regiment, stationed at Fort —— that it is now authoritatively announced that it will break camp within a few days and sail within the week for the other side, where the men will receive instruction in the field from specially detailed French army officers in the use of trench-bombs, raiding, etc.

"Among the sons of well-known New Yorkers upon the staff are Lieutenant Ogden Baker, son of Maxwell Baker, of Park Avenue; Lieutenant John Stanton, Junior——"

For a moment the motes in the sunlight swam in

## THE EARTHQUAKE

dizzying circles and I grasped the table to steady myself. Jack! Jack going?

"Oh, Helen!" I cried, wholly unnerved. "He can't go! He's too young. My God, it never occurred to me! Why, he's only a boy! I'll go to Washington—see Wilson. It would be a crime! I——"

I sank down at the table and put my face in my hands. Then I heard my wife's voice saying:

"John, dear, it's all right—it's simply splendid! Of course it's a surprise; but you—you wouldn't have it otherwise! It's where he ought to be! We should be the proudest people in New York. Our boy is going among the very first to fight to make the world safe for democracy, for Christian ideals; so that there never can be such an awful, awful war again; and—and— Oh, John! John! I can't bear it!"

She threw herself down beside me and held me tight. We sat there clinging to each other for some time. Then Helen raised her head and wiped her eyes.

"John, dear," she said, "let's go up to the house. I'll leave word for Margery at the office. I can't think in this place. I want to have my own things round me—my own books and pictures and furniture—not all this gilt and plush! I don't feel as if I were all here—at this hotel. I'm sure we can talk things over better there than in this horrible suite!"

## MYSELF—JOHN STANTON

I paid my bill to the dapper young gentleman at the hotel office, who seemed rather surprised at our sudden change of plans and who "trusted that everything had been satisfactory"; stated that I would send for my baggage that evening, helped Helen into a taxi, and started for Seventy-second Street. It was a lovely afternoon, sunlight everywhere, children playing with their nurses in Park Avenue, the streets clean and quiet; nothing seemed changed since we had gone away. As we turned into our own block Helen leaned out of the window of the taxi and looked up at the house.

"How nice!" she exclaimed. "Some one has hung out a big American flag! It must have been Henry!"

Sure enough, there over our white Colonial doorway, the pole suspended from the iron grill of the library windows, curling and uncurling in the soft afternoon breeze, floated the Stars and Stripes.

"Splendid!" I answered. "It was bully of your brother to do that."

Then my eye caught another and smaller flag beneath—a red flag enclosing an oblong field of white upon which was a single star of blue.

"Hello!" I cried. "What do you suppose that is? Do you see that other flag, Helen?"

"Why, yes!" she answered curiously. "I wonder what it can mean!"

The decrepit taxi-driver touched his hat.

## THE EARTHQUAKE

"Pardon me, ma'am," he said. "That blue star means that some one from this house has gone to the front. God bless him, whoever he is!"

We looked at each other in silence.

"God bless him," I repeated, though my lips quivered, "whoever he is!"

How familiar, yet how strange, seemed the silent interior of our house, with its shrouded furniture, its shadowy corners, its drawn curtains. For the first time I realized what it meant to me—to Helen—to all of us. There was the room where Margery had been born. There was Jack's half workshop, half stateroom, with that yellow Teddy-bear he had never quite brought himself to relinquish, sitting astride the football he had forced across the St. Mark's goal-line for a victory for Groton.

I closed the door quickly lest Helen should see it. Yet I felt that it was best that we should give up our home; best to surrender it to the unsympathetic hands of strangers than not to do our bit in teaching the rest of the nation the lesson of economy. At any price—however seemingly extravagant—a hotel would be cheaper than housekeeping.

"Well," I said finally when, after our inspection, we had gone down-stairs into the library and thrown open the windows to the afternoon sun, "it's tough, but we'll have to give it up!"

"Isn't there anything else we could do first?"

## MYSELF—JOHN STANTON

asked my wife. "I would do almost anything rather than lose my home!"

"The only way to really save any substantial sum of money is to make a radical change in our mode of life," I answered. "You would find it almost impossible to give up living here as you have always lived. Let's do the thing right and start differently."

Helen made no further protest, except to give a little sigh as she glanced at the portraits of my father and mother, which hung on either side of the fireplace.

"All right, dear," she agreed. "If we must, that is all there is to it."

There was, however, one factor in the situation upon which it appeared that we had not sufficiently reckoned. It had never occurred to me that we should have any difficulty about leasing our house if we cared to do so; but a brief colloquy over the telephone with our real-estate agent was enough to satisfy me that it would be practically impossible for us to find a tenant who would be willing to pay enough rent to enable us either to take an apartment or go to a hotel and effect any real saving. Practically every house in New York was for rent, he said; in fact, there were five other houses in our own block on the market.

Everybody had gone to Washington, or was going to spend the winter in the country; he mentioned several of our friends. People were cutting down on

## THE EARTHQUAKE

every hand. We might get a tenant at about half what our house might normally be expected to bring; but otherwise he could not give us much encouragement. The renting market had started out well; but lately there had been a bad slump. It was obvious that, unless we practically gave our house away, we should have either to close it up or live in it ourselves.

We considered the former course first. By going to a hotel we should save light, heat, repairs, various maintenance charges, and servants' wages. We should also not have to run our kitchen. We had previously kept ten servants. It would be much cheaper for the three of us and our maid to board at a hotel—say, the Chatwold.

I telephoned to my dapper young friend there and inquired what apartments were still available for the winter. He replied that there was one four-room suite left—but only one—which for a term of six months he would let me—"me"—have for nine hundred and seventy-five dollars a month, a substantial concession from ruling rates! I thanked him and hung up. We figured out that, on the basis of the data in hand, it would cost the three of us—with Helen's maid—on a conservative estimate, not a cent less than fifteen hundred dollars a month to live at the Chatwold. For eight months that would amount to twelve thousand dollars—practically as much as it would cost us to run our house.

## MYSELF—JOHN STANTON

We telephoned to many of the other hotels; but the best we could do was four hundred and fifty dollars a month, with an estimated dining-room charge of at least four hundred and fifty dollars more. This last was in an excellent hotel on a side street, but where we knew the rooms were small, rather dark, and distinctly unattractive. Nevertheless, to go there for the winter, even if we sacrificed our home, would be to effect a substantial saving. To me it seemed the most sensible thing to do, and I said so. But Helen answered:

"John, I don't want to go to a hotel. I want the quiet and order and privacy of my own home. I want my own family life. We've lived here twenty years, and this house—our things—are all part of us. It's the physical centre of our lives—whatever they are. I don't want Margery in a hotel; it's far better for her to stay here, where she can receive her friends quietly, instead of giving them tea in front of a string band."

"I agree with you," I replied patiently. "Of course I'd rather live here. But what are we going to do if we can't afford it?"

Then it was that Helen showed the rare and penetrating quality of mind which had compelled my admiration so often in her earlier years and which latterly had seemed to be dormant.

"John," she retorted eagerly, "do you know what

## THE EARTHQUAKE

you are urging me to do? You are proposing that we should run away—try to escape from our responsibilities, from the duty to economize which the war has forced upon us. I know it's all on my account. You think I'm a slave to comfort. Well, perhaps I have been. Maybe the war will liberate a lot of people. We have suddenly lost over a third of our income; but, even so, our income is about four times what my father and mother lived on right here in New York. I've always known that we—that everybody—spent too much money; but it's human nature to want to live the way one's friends live.

"Now we can't any longer. We've got to live on what we've got. If we're obliged to save fifteen thousand dollars, let's save it—not rush off to a hotel, to even greater extravagance. There's no calamity—no sorrow—no sickness that doesn't bring some good with it. If we ought to change our mode of life, let's change it—and be glad of the chance. If I run off to a hotel, where all I shall have to do, if I want anything, is to press a button; if I make you give up your home for the sake of my own convenience; if I turn coward when all the world is full of courage—why, John, I shan't be able to look at myself in the glass!"

I don't think I ever loved Helen more than at that moment; and if she had realized what her words meant to me she would have felt repaid a thousand



## MYSELF—JOHN STANTON

times for any future sacrifices. For several years I had felt uneasy at the monetary cost of an existence that not only left us nothing to spend upon many things I should greatly have enjoyed—European travel, for instance—but rendered our contributions to charity negligible.

I had really been poor on forty thousand dollars a year, frequently denying myself things that men with half my income regarded as matters of course. Taxicabs, for instance. My New England training had never enabled me to expend on the mere maintenance of our household the huge sum it required with any degree of complacency, for I knew in my heart that we were making an end of what should have been the means to an end. Our sole object in life had come to be ease of living. And, even so, though we had made a science of luxury we had not achieved our purpose.

The machinery of existence had been more important than existence itself. The servants had outnumbered the family three to one. Employed to reduce responsibility—that was why we had so many maids, chambermaids, parlor-maids, kitchen-maids, and laundresses—the irony of the situation lay in the fact that, instead of eliminating responsibility, all these people only added to it. The more “help” we had to work for us, the less help they were and the greater the effort required to superintend their inac-

## THE EARTHQUAKE

tivities. Instead of paying servants in order to keep house, we kept house in order to pay servants to live with us.

Moreover, houses, horses, yachts, motors—all demanded constant attention; but unfortunately it was an attention that required no physical exertion. We had ceased absolutely to do anything for ourselves. Our wives grew fat from their everlasting motor-ing. We—the supposed workers—were borne to and from business—miles—in luxurious limousines. Even when we went out to play golf, we were carried. In our own homes we went up and down in elevators.

None of us ever put foot in a street-car or the Subway. If we went to dinner in the next block we sent for René and the automobile. We were soft—perhaps even worse! I knew it; and now—thank heaven!—I knew that Helen knew it. Yet we never should have thought of changing the system if it had not been for the war. Should we change? Could we change? Wouldn't the sacrifice be too great? Fifteen thousand dollars!

"You're all right, Helen!" I exclaimed, shoving the cigar-box to one side and lighting a pipe. "Let's see if we can do it!"

I pulled Miss Peterson's expense sheet from my pocket and sat down beside her.

"Do it? Of course we can do it! Why, John,

## MYSELF—JOHN STANTON

imagine not being able to get along on twenty-five thousand dollars a year!"

She took the sheet from my hand and began going over it, item by item. Naturally, we could not do anything about our real-estate and water taxes, life and fire insurance premiums. These we passed by. But we had always taken a house on Long Island for the summer at an approximate rental of from twenty-five hundred to thirty-five hundred dollars; and this we decided we could cut to fifteen hundred—or stay in town. My own expenses I unhesitatingly cut to twelve hundred dollars, and Helen surprised me by saying that she could do quite beautifully on two thousand dollars. "Why should I want any new clothes this winter?" she asked.

Margery would have to get along on one thousand dollars instead of her accustomed two thousand. Jack—I tried to dodge his name, but Helen insisted on jerking me bravely back—Jack would cost us practically nothing. We decided to cut out the motor for the seven months in the city—a saving of at least two thousand dollars; to sell our opera tickets—two hundred and seventy-six dollars; to buy no new furnishings for the house, keep no men servants, reduce the number of maids, and put the kitchen on a war basis.

For what it is worth, here is how we proposed to save on ten items our fifteen thousand seven hundred dollars:

## THE EARTHQUAKE

	Actual average per year for past five years	Pro- posed allow- ance for 1918	Estimated saving
John Stanton—personal.....	\$2,000	\$1,200	\$800
Helen Stanton—personal.....	3,500	2,000	1,500
Margery Stanton.....	2,000	1,000	1,000
John Stanton, Junior.....	2,000	.....	2,000
Summer cottage.....	3,000	1,500	1,500
Opera, theatre, and so on.....	500	100	400
Servants.....	5,200	3,500	1,700
Supplies.....	8,500	4,250	4,250
Automobile.....	4,300	2,300	2,000
Short trips, and so on.....	500	.....	500
Total saving.....	.....	.....	\$15,650

After all, what did giving up the motor for the winter really mean to me?—although it cost me not a cent less than twelve dollars a day; or my vacuous-faced English butler and footman—why were they not in Flanders?—or the few clubs on Fifth Avenue, whose portals I rarely entered; or my seats at the opera—heretofore often occupied by indigent female relatives; or the elaborate cuisine we had previously been accustomed to maintain chiefly for the gastronomical entertainment of the ten voracious men and maid servants who had hitherto made our house their home, their restaurant, and their club?

In reality, nothing at all. I should not even be inconvenienced by any of these reductions. In point of fact, I could surrender, with entire equanimity, the

## MYSELF—JOHN STANTON

idea of having a cottage at the seaside, since I was infinitely more contented in my own home, and commuting tired me to death. There was not an item on our revised budget that needed to be a penny larger for our entire comfort. And yet we should save over fifteen thousand dollars a year and be living quite within my income—war-taxes included.

It set me thinking. I dare say it set Helen thinking, too. What did our previous expenditure of that fifteen thousand dollars represent? Our dependence on a conventional luxury that was really not luxury at all, but an impediment to freedom! It was the price we had paid simply to live like our friends; to be thought well off and successful. Yet we were ill off. We had ceased to know the verve that comes only from constant physical activity; we had lost spring, bodily and mental; our moral and physical attack; our ability to handle ourselves—in a word, our efficiency. We had lost the mastery of our own souls at a cost of fifteen thousand dollars a year.

Along with this I experienced the somewhat less meritorious reflection that if I could get along on fifteen thousand dollars less when my earning capacity was entirely cut off, I should achieve wealth when that income should be restored. Should I ever again be satisfied to pay fifteen thousand dollars a year just to oil the machinery of my existence? Why, what

## THE EARTHQUAKE

could I not do for myself and for others with such a sum of money? Was I, in fact, giving up anything? To this extent the war had proved a blessing instead of a burden. I was making no real sacrifice.

Through the smoke wreaths rising from my pipe my eye caught in the window the gentle swaying of the red flag with its single blue star. I turned to find Helen was gazing at it also.

"John," she said slowly, "I've been thinking that, after all, we're not going to do enough. We've only been planning how to live on our income. I read to-day that there was danger the Liberty Loan might not be fully subscribed. Think what it would mean if we sent hundreds of thousands of our young men over to fight and didn't give them the proper backing! It would be terrible! We ought to subscribe to the loan, whether we have the money or not; no matter whether we see our way clear to do it or not. Everybody ought to save every cent and lend it to the government. Don't you think we ought to subscribe for at least twenty thousand dollars?"

"If you tried to save twenty thousand dollars more," I retorted, "you would have to go and live in a boarding-house on a side street! I don't suppose we shall have to save it, though. We can sell some securities and lend Uncle Sam the money. We'll have to take quite a loss."

"I don't mind!" she answered. "Nothing is really

## MYSELF—JOHN STANTON

a sacrifice that doesn't hurt. Next to wearing a uniform, I guess the proudest badge of honor any of us can have is going to be a shabby suit of clothes."

We sat there without saying anything more until the room fell into shadow and the street-lamp across the way was lighted. I was just going to suggest that we go out to dinner somewhere when the front door-bell rang sharply.

Thinking it might be a telegram, I went downstairs and opened the door. Outside stood a tall figure in khaki. Messenger-boys did not dress like that now—did they? Then I felt myself being hugged violently and heard Jack's voice shouting:

"Hello, dad! It's ripping to have you back again! How's mother? And isn't it great that the regiment sails week after next!"

## II

### MY HOUSEHOLD

Helen, Margery, and I had our breakfast next morning of coffee and rolls served in the sunny window of the sitting-room by Mrs. Gavin, our caretaker. During the preceding evening, while Jack had been with us, we had thought of nothing but the hideous gap his pending departure for France would make in our family circle; but now that he had gone back to camp we had time to face the concrete problems the war had evolved for us.

It had been the first night we had spent in our own home for nearly a year, and this was the dawn of a new sort of existence. Heretofore we had taken no thought of the morrow or, for that matter, of to-day. When we opened the house in the autumn we simply telegraphed to a firm of professional house-cleaners to come with their vacuum tubes, their rotary sweepers, their acids and varnishes, and get the place ready—usually at a cost of about three hundred dollars. Then we sent on ahead five or six servants, including the cook, to prepare the way, and arrived, in due course, in a perfectly ordered and well-running establishment.



## MY HOUSEHOLD

When we returned from six weeks in Paris or London our motor met us at the dock, I found my dress clothes laid out in their customary place, and dinner was served by the butler and the second man just as if we had not been away at all. But now there was to be no butler and no second man. Our resolution taken the afternoon before was to be put to the test. Would Helen be able to manage it? Or, if she could manage it, could she stand it? However, I saw no weakening in her face as I lit my cigarette and glanced at her across the table.

"You had better send for René," she said, smiling. "The sooner you tell him he must go the better. I'm going down-town to engage a cook."

In spite of Helen's cheerfulness I realized what giving up her motor would mean to her; how physically dependent upon it she had become. I hated the idea of my wife hanging on to a strap in the street-cars while the boors in the neighboring seats ignored her sex. Besides, how could Margery, with her many social engagements, possibly manage to get along without it? And if we lost the peerless René, could we ever find another treasure like him? No; I would find some other and less drastic economy!

"Helen," I said, "I've been thinking it over, and I feel that it would be bad business for us to give up René. We couldn't replace him. Probably we can cut down on something else that——"

## THE EARTHQUAKE

But Helen had risen to her feet with a gesture of finality.

"No, John," she interrupted; "that has been decided, once and for all. It's a matter of conscience. I shall not keep the car this winter."

"Anyhow," I urged feebly, "you might as well run it for a few days while you are getting settled—say, for a week. It seems foolish not to, you know, when it's standing right there round the corner in the garage."

She shook her head.

"I don't want to begin using the motor. I don't trust myself. If I once started I mightn't want to give it up. Let me have ten cents for the bus, please!"

"You're a brave woman, Helen!" I answered. "Well, here's your dime!"

"You'll need a chore man, daddy," volunteered my daughter as my wife drew on her gloves. "The house is like an ice-chest."

"Didn't we have one—an Italian?" I inquired.

"Yes," answered Helen. "I think Mrs. Gavin can find him for you. If you can't get hold of him you might start a fire in the furnace yourself."

I said nothing. Why not? If Helen could go downtown in the bus, surely I ought to be able to start a fire! But my heart was filled with more than mere misgivings.

"Well, what is Margery going to do?" I inquired lightly. "What's her particular bit?"

## MY HOUSEHOLD

"I think Margery had better go over the linen and china and see if there is any of it left," replied her mother. "After that she can collaborate with Mrs. Gavin in getting lunch."

I bade my wife farewell at the front door and, having turned Margery loose among the china, sought the whereabouts of our chore man. But Mrs. Gavin had not seen Angelo that morning and was ignorant of his place of abode.

We had occupied our house for nearly twenty years, but only once before did I recall having descended to the lower regions presided over by that being so singularly misnamed the useful man. At any rate, I had always looked upon him as anything but useful—a fiction, a frill, a foolish concession to the unwillingness of the modern domestic to do any real work.

"Now," said I to myself, with a growing sense of virtue, of mastery of my own soul, "we'll begin to go at things in the right way—thoroughly, from the ground up."

The cellar stairs were dark and I had to reascend to the kitchen to procure a candle.

"You'll spoil yer beautiful clothes," warned the solicitous Mrs. Gavin. "You'll get ashes all over yerself!"

"You don't know me!" I retorted. "It's no trick to make a fire! Why, when I was a boy I always—"

## THE EARTHQUAKE

But she had vanished into the mysterious distances of the laundry.

Our cellar seemed curiously unfamiliar as I stood with the candle elevated above my head, and muffled noises from the street outside gave me the feeling of being immersed in an Egyptian tomb—like a helpless Rhadames without his Aïda. A multitude of pipes of every size and crookedness writhed round a complicated apparatus which I felt reasonably confident was the furnace. Dust lay thick everywhere and scattered pieces of coal endangered my equilibrium at every step.

Timidly I opened one of the doors. It was choked with ashes and cinders. Curse the dago! I must clean out the grate before I could start the fire. I shall not describe the agonizing scene that followed, but at the end of a gruelling half-hour, reeking with sweat, and my hair, mouth, and eyes filled with dust, I exultantly laid in the furnace a lot of newspapers and kindling and put on a shovel or two of coal as a starter. I then discovered that I had no matches; and as it did not occur to me to make use of the candle, which I had stuck on the coal-bin, I was obliged to ascend to the kitchen again.

Mrs. Gavin controlled her features with difficulty. "Have you turned on the water, Mr. Stanton?" she asked innocently. "You know it's a hot-water furnace. I've fixed the radiators up-stairs, already, for you."

## MY HOUSEHOLD

I hadn't known it was a hot-water furnace. If it had not been for that missing match I might have burned the bottom off the boiler or blown the whole thing through the roof!

"Of course I shall turn on the water!" I replied haughtily, receiving the match-box. "What did you suppose I would do?"

"There's an indicator, too," she continued vaguely.

"Oh, yes, of course—an indicator," I repeated helplessly.

Down in the darkness among the pipes I discovered at least five different handles by which I thought the water might be let into the furnace. One by one I turned them, without result. Apparently there wasn't any water. Perhaps it wasn't a hot-water furnace after all! Then I found a curious little valve, and on moving it received an answering gurgle, followed by a rush. Water! It was like finding it in the Sahara!

With the fast-dying candle I now searched for the indicator. I did not know what it was supposed to indicate, but I dared not disregard it. Yes; there it was, right on top of the furnace. Lifting the candle, I perceived that it had two hands—a red one and a black one. The red one pointed through the accumulated dust of ages to the number 100, while the black one apparently had its affections permanently affixed upon zero.

Meantime the water continued to run. Where was

## THE EARTHQUAKE

it running to? A furnace, like a human being, must have a limit to its capacity. I began to be worried. Suppose the water, having flooded all the hidden veins and arteries of the furnace mechanism, were now leaping gayly over the top of some tank or basin, to come presently pouring down the stairs, bearing Mrs. Gavin along with it, like a female Charlie Chaplin. Why had I ever tried to start the furnace, anyway? I reversed the handle of the valve.

I was now just about where I had started, after the lapse of an hour. Then I said to myself:

“Stanton, you have lived in this house twenty years. This furnace has kept you lukewarm in winter and made you swelter in spring and autumn. You would have suffered—perhaps died—without it. You need it in your business. You cannot economize on it without reckless extravagance in doctors. It is the axis of your domestic sphere. Either you or it must be master here! This is a test of character. Light that fire—or be forever disgraced in your own eyes and those of Mrs. Gavin.”

Meantime that furnace was sitting there with its mouth wide open and its tongue in its cheek. I glared back at it resentfully. The indicator was still immutable. Then suddenly it dawned upon me that the water had run out of the furnace as fast as it had run in. I must prevent it, somehow. Down on my hands and knees I went until I found another handle, back

## MY HOUSEHOLD

of the damper. It yielded to my touch. Again I turned on the water. A clucking sound became audible. Something was happening to the indicator! Aha! The black arrow had moved. Cluck-cluck! It was jumping ahead like a taximeter! I leaped upon the valve and shut off the water. At last!

My hand trembled as I closed the furnace-door and lit the fire. Was it fatigue, was it excitement, or was it spiritual exaltation? I believe that it was the last. Carefully adjusting draft and damper, I climbed the stairs to the kitchen. I had the feeling of being a real man. I was the boss—the owner—of that furnace. No one could give me any back talk about furnaces—hot-water or otherwise—again! No chore man could put anything across on me.

Mrs. Gavin seemed to have gone out, but as I emerged from the shadows of the passage I came face to face with an enraged and malevolent Italian—Angelo.

“Who you fell’ dat getta my job?”

I have described my encounter with the furnace—accurate in every detail—in order that the reader may fully appreciate the parlous state of my ignorance of the physical mechanism of my own life. I had been utterly helpless in my own house. If anything, no matter how trifling, went wrong with the gas, electricity, plumbing, heating, or elevator I had to tell

## THE EARTHQUAKE

the butler to send for a gas-fitter, plumber, steam-fitter, or electrician.

Emerging from that cellar, I had to admit that Angelo—like Gunga Din—was a better man than myself. I did not know how to turn the water on or off, or the gas and electricity, though the Commissioner of Gas, Water, and Electricity was an intimate friend of mine. I was ignorant of the whereabouts of the gas-meter and the electric-meter, and I did not even know whether I had a water-meter or not. I had no idea where the tank was—or if I had one.

I had never asked the price of coal; how much was ordered; or how much, in fact, I got. I paid my bills without question. The coal man, the wood man, the iceman, the milkman, the butcher, the grocer, the baker, and even the dry-goods man, could have sent me in bills to any amount for undelivered goods, and I should have paid them cheerfully.

My faith in the honesty of my fellows above Forty-second Street might not have been able to move mountains; but I am sure it was worth thousands—to somebody. Yet in business I watched with an eagle eye the well-dressed gentlemen with whom I dealt and took nothing whatsoever on faith. As a business man I was from Missouri; as a householder in a great metropolis I was a simple-minded yokel.

Down in my banking-office the people in my employ obeyed me with a jump, and received the "sack"



## MY HOUSEHOLD

or the "hook"—whichever is the correct technical substantive—for the slightest incivility or carelessness. In my equally expensive and no less important establishment up-town my men servants not infrequently indicated by the frigidity of their demeanor what they thought of me and my suggestions—I cannot refer to my remarks as orders—as to how they should spend their time.

They had every other afternoon and evening out; they arrived at the house in the morning just in time to officiate at breakfast at nine o'clock; and their chief function seemed to be to stand in the front hall and hand me my hat and stick, after which they probably dawdled away the morning smoking in the pantry, reading the magazines, or glancing through Burke's "Peerage."

The female domestics, though better workers, were no less exacting than the men in regard to time off. When, on the occasion of our annual migration to Newport, they left the house in a body to go to the train, their numbers suggested a parade of the Daughters of the Revolution. A silent and ominous antagonism characterized their deportment.

No one of my family ever entered the kitchen or exercised any authority there. The cook ordered all the meals. We did not give orders to her. We assumed a placating attitude, fearful, as it were, lest we might be discharged if we incurred her displeasure.

## THE EARTHQUAKE

As a man of financial affairs I was regarded as a success; as the head of a domestic household I was worse than a joke. And my wife, considering that the home is supposed to be woman's sphere, was as bad as or even worse than I was.

Our house was run independently of us, not by us—and hardly for us. We were ignoramuses, totally unfit to assume the management of our own domestic economy, just as I had shown myself to be with regard to the furnace. Yet I had mastered it; and, if I had, there was hope that it might not be too late for us to assume the responsibilities of ordering our own meals and handling our own affairs.

Since the day I wrestled with that furnace I have sometimes thought that the government to which I owed my allegiance was really no better prepared to cope with the practical possibilities involved in its being one of the family of nations than I was as a householder. If at any time a burglar had seen fit to enter my home he could have held me up at the point of his gun and relieved me of my valuables without the possibility of resistance. I knew that New York had its quota of burglars, but I had no burglar-alarm, no firearms, and no watchman. If the burglar had come, and I had survived his visit, next day I should have hired a private patrolman and purchased a revolver; but the burglar would have had things all his own way for the time being. Like myself, Uncle

## MY HOUSEHOLD

Sam had been quite content to be a good business man, and in his family life had been entirely too easy-going.

My gymnastics in the cellar necessitated changing my clothes and a thorough washing up; so it was nearly lunch-time before I could send for René. For eight years he had been a family institution. He had taken Margery to school in the morning and returned for her at one; had borne me down-town to my office at nine-thirty and called for me at five; had carried Helen out to luncheon and on her constant shopping excursions; and in the evening had transported us to the theatre, to the opera, or to dinner. The little car was kept rolling all the time. None of us set foot on the asphalt if we could help it, and meantime we had all gained substantially in weight—particularly my wife.

“René,” I said apologetically, “I have some bad news for you. Mrs. Stanton and I have decided that we ought not to keep the motor this winter. We have got to make some sacrifices, and we feel that the car is such an expense we shall have to let you go.”

I was very sorry to lose our lame chauffeur. We were all devoted to him, and for that reason had found him another place and paid him half-wages during our absence. But though I knew my friend, by whom he had been employed, to be anxious to retain his services, I was afraid René would show some

## THE EARTHQUAKE

resentment. He merely smiled regretfully and touched his cap, however.

"I understand, m'sieur," he answered in a sympathetic tone. "I am sorry, of course. But when all the world has gone mad, *que voulez-vous?* We must all suffer—eh? We must all make our little sacrifices. And, *vraiment*, m'sieur, you do not need a car in the city. There are very many taxis. By and by, when the war is over, I shall come back to m'sieur—perhaps."

"I hope so, René," I replied, touched by his manner. "But none of us can tell. We may never have our car again. Here is the check for your half-wages."

I held out the slip of paper to him, but he hesitated.

"*Non, non*, m'sieur!" he exclaimed in half protest. "How can I take the money when I come not back to you? It was to be a—what do you say?—a bonus, if I returned. And now I do not return. "*Non*, m'sieur, I cannot take it."

"But, René," I insisted—"how ridiculous! It was a contract. The money is yours. I have no right to it. I shall be very much displeased if you do not take it. So will madame. I mean it."

René fingered his mustache.

"It is very kind of you, m'sieur," he said simply, "but if I take it it will be only because of my country. Each month I send all but a few dollars back to France—all I can spare. Keep half, then, m'sieur,

## MY HOUSEHOLD

and buy for me a few of those bonds of liberty—that bind all the Allies together. Yes, m'sieur, you shall invest for me here half of this money, and half I shall send to France."

"You are a good fellow, René!" I cried, holding out my hand. "Very well; I will do as you say. But don't forget us! Some time, when you are not busy, come round and let us know how you are getting on."

I stood on the front steps and watched him, through the slight mist in my eyes, limping down the street until he turned the corner in the direction of Third Avenue. Surely the war had done something for René—something for all of us!

In the hall I met Margery, her hair afly, her hands black with dust, and an expression of horror, mingled with amusement, upon her face.

"Dad," she announced, "there's hardly a piece of china that isn't nicked! And as for the glass, I can't seem to find more than a few odd pieces of each kind. It was a new set last year!"

"Never mind," I answered, slipping my arm through hers. "There'll be all we shall need. I guess we won't do much entertaining this year. I like variety, anyhow. What are we going to have for lunch?"

"Canned ox-tail soup," she laughed. "Scrambled eggs and grapes. What's the matter with that!"

"Nothing," I agreed. "And the sooner I get at it the better satisfied I shall be."

## THE EARTHQUAKE

"You know, this picnicking is rather jolly," continued my erstwhile dainty daughter. "It's lots of fun doing things oneself. . . . Hello! There's mother!"

She sprang to the front door and swept it open with a courtesy.

"Come right in, mum!" she mimicked. "Shure an' the missis'll be tickled to death to see yez! And lunch is after being ready on the table this quarter of an hour!"

"Well," remarked Helen as, a few moments later, we drew round the board presided over by Mrs. Gavin, "I've got a cook!"

"How much a month?" I inquired.

"Forty dollars," she answered triumphantly. "And we used to pay Julia seventy-five! Besides, this one will come without a kitchen-maid, and that means a saving of thirty-five dollars a month more!"

"Great business! What other victories have you achieved?"

"A parlor-maid, a laundress, and a chambermaid—for thirty dollars a month each."

"Instead of——"

"A butler at eighty, a second man at sixty, two laundresses at forty, a parlor-maid, two lady's-maids, and two chambermaids at thirty-five each."

"Helen!" I stammered, aghast. "Do you seri-

## MY HOUSEHOLD

ously mean to tell me that you can run the house with four servants instead of eleven?"

"I do! Of course we'll have to close up one of the bedroom floors entirely, and two of the three sitting-rooms. I may even leave the furniture covers on in some places. You won't mind, will you? It will cut the house almost in half. Four servants can handle it easily.

"Of course I don't mean to claim that your bells will be answered so quickly, or that you'll get French cooking, or that I won't have to keep you waiting sometimes when you want me to go out with you in the evening—I shan't have any personal maid, you know; but think of the saving—a hundred and thirty dollars a month as against five hundred and five!"

"And the food they would have eaten!" I added with a glow of satisfaction. "Heaven knows what quantities!"

"That is another matter," remarked my wife judiciously—"one I shall have to look into. But if I can reduce my servants' pay-roll by three hundred and seventy-five dollars—over 70 per cent—I ought to be able to do something with the butcher's and grocer's bills."

"'Who can find a virtuous woman?'" I murmured admiringly, "'for her price is far above rubies.'"

My wife threw me a grateful smile.

"We shall probably have our ups and downs," she

## THE EARTHQUAKE

admitted. "Mrs. Russell has been having a terrible time. You see, she kept her whole staff of domestics and cut down the kitchen-table to almost nothing. She insisted that it was too much trouble to try to get new servants. And this morning, when the butler gave notice and so did the cook, she was so paralyzed with fright that she told them to go ahead just as they had before."

"That's a fine way to get behind the administration!" I retorted in disgust. "What do you hear of other people?"

"A great many are cutting down or living in hotels. The employment offices are full of domestics looking for places—even men. I didn't have any trouble. Our chief difficulty is going to be about the supply bills. . . . John, you look tired! What's the matter?"

"Oh, nothing," I evaded her. "It's all right. Feeling our journey a little, I guess. Then I have had my talk with René—and I built a fire in the furnace."

"I'm so glad you did," she replied. "The house was too cold."

"So am I," I muttered, but for a different reason.

When the new servants, in due course, made their appearance I was unable to observe any difference between them and the old. It is quite true that it took our one maid somewhat longer to serve dinner than it had our butler and second man; but personally I felt



## MY HOUSEHOLD

much more at ease than when every mouthful I ate was being watched and criticised by the imposing gentlemen who had hitherto condescended to pass me my food in return for their board and lodging, in addition to a monetary consideration almost as large as had been my paternal grandfather's salary as a clergyman.

Moreover, as the days passed I did not notice that the meals were any less abundant or appetizing than before. Like most men, I cared nothing for variety. What I wanted was solid food, well cooked. And this I had in plenty; in fact, after the lapse of a week I asked Helen whether she was not rather extravagant in her providing.

Seriously, I had not noticed any particular change in our manner of living, except a few trifles, such as that after the soup we now had fish or meat, salad or dessert, instead of all four; that when we had chops they did not wear pantalets; and that our desserts lacked the architectural magnificence and Cinquecento ornamentation that had previously characterized them.

"Extravagant?" answered Helen, opening a drawer and handing me a little pile of slips. "Perhaps I'll get the ordering down finer as we go along. As it is, we are living on about a third of what we used to spend. Most of it went on the kitchen-table; but there was a tremendous waste on our own. I suppose

## THE EARTHQUAKE

you've noticed that we don't have very much left over when we get through? No? Well, Julia's idea—the idea of most cooks in big houses, I guess—was that the serving of a luncheon or dinner was an æsthetic affair. How the table looked was just as important as how the food tasted.

"For instance, she always served a complete circle of lamb chops, no matter how many of us were going to eat them; and the roast beef or saddle of lamb had to be big enough to look well on the dish. Quantity was an end in itself; it was part of a properly ordered meal. And we always had meat twice a day and fancy fruits from the grocer. Haven't you missed them?"

"Missed what?" I asked.

"The meat and fruit."

"Haven't we been having them right along?"

Helen could not repress a smile.

"What is the use of keeping house for a man, anyway," she exclaimed with assumed peevishness, "when he doesn't care two cents whether the table is pretty or not, or whether he eats steak or baked beans!"

"But I'm crazy about beans!" I replied.

"Then you ought to be perfectly satisfied," she laughed. "You've had them three times this week!"

"I am," I answered. "I don't want anything better. And that fillet of sole you gave me last night——"

## MY HOUSEHOLD

"Flounder, at sixteen cents a pound!" she interrupted.

"But, Helen," I protested with sincere admiration, "how did you know how to do it? You who've always been used to the best of everything and have hated to have anything to do with servants, or even to go into the kitchen!"

She looked at me quizzically.

"John," she said, "you don't think I'm an absolute fool, do you? Don't you suppose that I—and all rich women—have always known that we did not eat simply in order to satisfy our hunger and keep ourselves strong and well—but for appearances? It didn't take any brains to realize that. The food served in the dining-room has always had a decorative quality—just like the linen and silver and china. And there had to be a certain number of courses. Why, I never used to sit down to lunch, even by myself, without having some sort of hors d'œuvre, soup, an entrée, salad, and dessert! You don't imagine I thought I needed them, do you? Now tell me: What do you have for lunch down-town?"

"A slice of roast beef and a cup of coffee."

"Exactly!" she retorted. "You eat what you need to satisfy your appetite, and no more. Well, we women used to eat the kind of food a seventy-five-dollar cook thought she ought to prepare and an eighty-dollar butler would be willing to serve without losing

## THE EARTHQUAKE

his self-respect. Can you see old Chatterton serving a slice of roast beef and a cup of coffee?"

I couldn't, by any stretch of my imagination.

"No," I admitted; "nor can I imagine him *eating* a lunch of just roast beef and coffee! I am sure he never condescended to touch anything but *pâté de foie gras* and vintage champagne."

"Pretty near it! I've been studying our old market-books. You probably won't believe it, but in one month last year we ate in this house over one hundred and fifty pounds of roast beef and a hundred dollars' worth of fruit!"

"You say we ate it?"

"Why, yes; I suppose we must have," she answered doubtfully.

"Helen," I adjured her, "don't deceive yourself! We didn't eat it; we were just charged for it!"

Down at the office I timidly recounted to my partner Lord some of the high lights of our recent domestic revolution. He listened with only polite interest, intimating that I was way behind the times. It appeared that most people of our means had also awakened to the absurdity or at least the high cost of table-dressing.

"Don't talk to me about it, old man," he begged. "Honestly, it makes me ill! I've just figured out that this blooming hidebound conventionality about

## MY HOUSEHOLD

eating has cost me over fifty thousand dollars in the last ten years. How I wish I had it now!"

That is what the first jar of the present earthquake did to the Stanton ménage, to my partner, and to numbers of my friends. It has jarred us harder than some other people, because it has actually reduced our incomes. We have been forced to cut down. It is far less to our credit than to that of those who have done so voluntarily. But, whatever the reason, it is a good thing. Waste in food is the most wasteful of all waste, for the reason that it is constant—three times a day, year in and year out.

Even before the present campaign for domestic economy instituted by the Food Administration, tremendous saving had been going on as far back as 1915-1916. I am credibly informed that last winter New York City's refuse had been reduced by thirty-three per cent, and that the official scavengers found they could get through their work two hours earlier each day! Hotels and hospitals that had paid considerable sums to have their swill taken away found it a substantial source of income. The unseparated fats had lined the garbage-pail with gold!

The war has set everybody thinking about things that the European studied and systematized, as a matter of course, centuries past. The Frenchman, the Italian, the German, and the Englishman long ago

## THE EARTHQUAKE

discovered that for the worker it is, in general, easier to save than to increase one's earning capacity and that a careful adjustment of expenditure to needs in daily life would, in due time, bring comfort if not wealth. I realized, at last, the reason why thrift on the part of the mistress of the household is lauded throughout the pages of Holy Writ. I suppose the respect paid to the wealthy even in recent times was due to the belief that riches could only be attained by industry and thrift, and that therefore the rich man was a virtuous citizen and one to be proud of. Even if we won't admit it, we still have something of the same feeling—always, of course, conceding that millionaires, as a class, are a parcel of crooks.

Crooked or not, however, we have always insisted that the rich man should spend his money freely—perhaps in order that we might get some of it. The "tightwad" was and is our national detestation. On the stage the close-lipped stingy financier always went to jail, and the lavish, roistering young spend-thrift was played up as a hero. It was considered almost a duty for the rich to be wasteful. Lavishness was felt to indicate a spiritual superiority to lucre.

One may be inclined to doubt whether the millionaire who floods the Tenderloin with champagne shows as much contempt for his money as he does a soulful appreciation of what it can buy. One is tempted into somewhat foggy metaphysics in pursuit of the allur-

## MY HOUSEHOLD

ing desire to give the devil his due in this respect. But, anyhow, we all do hate a mean man.

Well, the war has made us discriminate between meanness and thrift. Thrift is the prevention of waste; meanness is saving for oneself alone. But war is waste "elevated into a religion." They say at the Rockefeller Institute that the cost of the present war for one week would stamp out tuberculosis all over the world forever!

All of us are now educated to the tremendous results that can be effected by slight economies on the part of the individuals composing a nation of a hundred million people. Thanks to Mr. Hoover, we dream dreams and see visions—of mountains of sugar and rivers of milk—all created by our mere abstinence from one cup of tea or coffee a week. After all, it doesn't require a great deal of imagination. Multiply almost anything by one hundred million and we are quite naturally left gasping.

One hundred million loaves of bread takes, in the making, a powerful lot of flour—which might be sent to the Allies. The war has jarred that into the heads of a lot of good people who never thought of it before. More than that, it has brought home to everybody a startling conception of the tremendous latent power for saving—which, after all, is the equivalent of production—possessed by the American people. And, because it is so easy to accomplish a gigantic result by

## THE EARTHQUAKE

the simplest means, everybody ought to start in, as a matter of course, to help.

As a result thrift is going to be elevated to its ancient niche among the cardinal American virtues. Of course with some this will be due to mere self-interest. When eggs are too high people go without omelets. But principally it will be due to the nation-wide recognition of the fact that waste is wrong—and under present circumstances a crime!

The amount of stale bread thrown away daily in New York City reached into the tons. The only reason for this was that more bread was baked than was needed. So it was with everything that was served by the piece. The cook always sent up at least one extra chop—for looks. If she ordered ten pounds of roast, the butcher—presuming upon her good nature or relying upon her connivance—sent her twelve and a half or thirteen. It was cut in the kitchen and served in the dining-room. People helped themselves to two slices because one slice didn't seem enough, though two were obviously too much. Pie was cut into huge segments in the pantry before it was passed. Housewives habitually served twice as much of everything as was necessary in order to earn the proud title of "liberal providers." Puddings, more than half the time, were sent back to the kitchen only partly consumed.

Nothing in metropolitan centres ever reappeared



## MY HOUSEHOLD

upon the dining-room table, once it had been taken away. I speak, of course, of establishments where a number of servants are employed. These servants ate and still eat five or six meals a day, without any restraint upon their power of consumption. They began with a heavy breakfast, between seven and eight o'clock in the morning, consisting of tea and coffee, hot bread, eggs, bacon, oatmeal, jam, and fruit. At ten or half past they had and have a second or supplementary breakfast of bread, milk, coffee, or tea—"Just a bite, you know, madam!"

Dinner at twelve sees the kitchen-table groaning under the burden of the chief or third meal of the day—soup, roast meat or fish, vegetables, tea, coffee, and milk, cake, pie, pudding, jam, preserves, fruit. Along about two-thirty the famished domestic is moved to avert starvation by a fourth resort to the larder, and a secondary luncheon of tea, coffee, milk, lemonade, cake, the remains of the pie and the fruit, and any unconsidered trifles from up-stairs that may have been salvaged by the butler or parlor-maid.

Thus they are enabled to endure the pangs of hunger until five o'clock, when the regular supper is served, followed by another—or sixth—meal at nine or ten o'clock, just before the friends go home, consisting of everything that is left in the house which they have previously overlooked.

## THE EARTHQUAKE

To meet these useless and extravagant demands, cooks are accustomed to order huge quantities of raw and canned foods, which, in addition to being a temptation to waste, constitute an equally strong one to dishonesty upon the part of those employees who, though they share in the general gastronomical privileges below stairs, live out and have others less fortunate dependent upon them at home.

How well I remember discovering in our area our cook's aunt—a massive lady from Galway—with a basket hardly concealed beneath her shawl, in which were a fourteen-pound roast, a milk-fed Philadelphia capon, several packages of tea, sugar, and coffee, various jars of preserves and cans of table delicacies, and a handful of my best cigars! But that was long ago.

The war has brought up mistress and servant alike with a jerk. My sober guess is that, in the section of New York City between Fifty-ninth and Ninetieth Streets and Fifth and Madison Avenues not fifty per cent of the mistresses of households knew what their servants had for dinner, or how many persons sat down to table in the servants' dining-hall—including followers, brothers, sisters, aunts, and cousins just over or temporarily out of a job; how many times a week meat was served in the kitchen; what proportion the bills for the maintenance of the help bore to the total cost of keeping up the establishment; or whether

## MY HOUSEHOLD

the price of flour was five dollars or twenty dollars a barrel. Well, they know now—some of them!

Ladies who have always assumed that it would be indelicate to refer to a pot-roast or a rump-steak now daily visit their ice-boxes and direct the activities of their cooks. The régime of the Queen of the Kitchen is over, unless she is one of Mr. Hoover's anointed. It is a paradox of interest that in some households employing a large number of servants, where from five hundred to one thousand dollars a month is spent for food supplies alone, the monthly budget has grown steadily less, with the advance in prices, since our entry into the war.

The reason is not far to seek. Where heretofore there was no restraint upon the cooks, now, for the first time, some attention at least is being paid to the quantity of supplies ordered, their quality and cost, and the use to which the remnants of food left over from each meal are put. One lady tells me that the moral effect of her nodding to the cook in the morning is enough to save her about ten dollars a day. If it saves ten dollars in money, what must that nod save toward the flour and sugar we must send to starving France and Belgium?

This is highly encouraging as far as it goes; but, so far as I have observed, only a small minority of people of my acquaintance—unless their incomes have been reduced—have materially cut down their scale of

## THE EARTHQUAKE

living. Those who, like myself, have been compelled to do so have bowed to necessity; but I know of but few of my friends who are reorganizing their households and enforcing genuine domestic economies in order to buy more Liberty Bonds or give the money thus saved to war relief.

They are, no doubt, buying Liberty Bonds and giving generously to war charities, but they have not reached the state of mind in which they feel called upon to endure discomfort, or even to inconvenience themselves in order to furnish additional money for the support of the government or for relief-work.

We saw the same phenomenon in times of peace. Rich women who believed that Christ measured the value of giving by the sacrifice involved, and taught that to save one's soul it might, in some instances at least, be well to sell everything one had and give the proceeds to the poor, were entirely satisfied to continue to roll round in their limousines, though they could have disposed of them at a reasonable price and saved the lives of hundreds of tubercular children with the money.

Most of the people I know are sincerely trying to follow out the directions of the Food Administration and to conserve those special necessities that are so vital to our allies and to our own fighting force. Apart from that, I don't think they have really done very much. It is too often a hard and disagreeable job,

## MY HOUSEHOLD

involving usually a state of belligerency, or at least armed neutrality, with the domestics.

There is another aspect of affairs upon which the lady of fashion might profitably consult her pet clairvoyant: If we are forced to send a couple of million men to France and Italy in order to pull the fangs of Hindenburg and Ludendorff, she will in time be apt to find herself not only without a chauffeur, butler, or second man, but cookless and maidless as well. With her agreeable bank balance she may be willing to continue to pay the upward-leaping wages of the leisure class who wait on us; but not so the majority of employers. The servants will seek other work.

Wages of domestics generally have gone up from fifteen to twenty per cent since the war began. Considering that they receive their board and lodging, which have gone up about fifty per cent in the same period, a female domestic servant is costing her mistress not far from thirty-five per cent more than a year or so ago. A twenty-five-dollar maid now asks thirty-five, and her board costs about ten dollars a month more than it did.

But it will not eventually, I feel sure, be so much a question of wages; the difficulty will be to get servants at all. The scarcity of labor will not stop when it reaches Fifth Avenue. I should not be at all surprised, if the war continues another two years, to find practically every mistress of a household with

## THE EARTHQUAKE

her daughters doing their share of the housework, as a matter of course—just as they are doing in England.

And that is exactly what Helen and Margery are doing now. If the wives of my friends are not willing to do this—why, they had better look round for a nice, dry, airy cave in a sunny climate where they can sleep on the ground, live on yams and breadfruit and bathe—if they still find bathing necessary and agreeable—in the nearest brook.

But running the house is a woman's job, let who will deny it. Mrs. Emily James Putnam, in "The Lady," quotes the account Ischomachos gave to Socrates of how he started his wife in the right direction after he had married her. Isch was a young Athenian swell of about the same social status as our friend Highbilt, here in New York.

"First," said he, "we put together everything that had to do with the sacrifices. Then we grouped the maids' best clothes, the men's best clothes and their soldier outfits, the maids' bedding, the men's bedding, the maids' shoes and the men's shoes. We put weapons in one group and classified under different heads the tools for wool-working, baking, cooking, care of the bath and of the table, and so on. Then we made a cross-classification of things used every day and things used on holidays only. Next we set aside from the stores sufficient provisions for a month, and also what we calculated would last a year. That is the

## MY HOUSEHOLD

only way to keep your supplies from running out before you know it.

"After that we put everything in its appropriate place, summoned the servants, explained our system to them, and made each one responsible for the safety of each article needed in his daily work, and for restoration, after use, to its proper place. . . . I told my wife that good laws will not keep a state in order unless they are enforced, and that she, as the chief executive officer under our constitution, must contrive by rewards and punishments that law should prevail in our house.

"By way of apology for laying upon her so many troublesome duties, I bade her observe that we cannot reasonably expect servants spontaneously to be careful of the master's goods, since they have no interest in being so; the owner is the one who must take trouble to preserve his property. . . . I advised her to look on at the bread-making and stand by while the housekeeper dealt out the supplies, and to go about inspecting everything. Thus she could practise her profession and take a walk at the same time. I added that excellent exercise could be had by making beds and kneading dough."

Good sense, that! The newly wedded Mrs. Ischo-machos could teach a good deal to some of our war brides. Modern New York can learn something from ancient Athens. But our women will come up to



## THE EARTHQUAKE

the domestic scratch later on, even if they have not done so already. Education is slow, particularly in the case of the middle-aged—and resurfacing one's gastro-intestinal tract is a hazardous process.

However, it is doing Helen and Margery and me a great deal of good. My wife looks younger than she has for years, because she eats only what she needs to eat and walks instead of riding in a motor. Both she and Margery have gained alertness in body and mind. They have tackled their job gallantly and have never even complained; but I know that at times it has been hard for them.

It is easy enough for the man who is away from home all day, occupied about his business. He does not care very much how the house runs so long as he gets his warm supper, his pipe, and his cosey chair by the reading-lamp. It is the woman who has to assume all the worry of making things go, of planning all the details of housekeeping, of keeping the servants good-natured, of making both ends meet. It is trebly hard if one has to begin after fifty. It is often easier to give up one's money or one's sons than to break the habits of a lifetime.

The war is doing strange things to us. It is giving us new natures. I have not said my prayers since I was a boy, and I gave up reading the Scriptures years ago; but the other night, just before we went up to bed, I took down our old dusty family Bible and



## MY HOUSEHOLD

opened it at the family record. There, in my mother's fine handwriting, was the record of my birth, and beneath it, in Helen's, was that of our Jack—who is going away so soon.

"Look here, Helen," I said awkwardly, "don't you think we might get something out of this again if we read a bit every night?"

She nodded, her face lighting up with eagerness. "I'm so glad you feel that way, John!" she exclaimed.

So I turned over the pages until I came to what I was looking for—the thirty-first chapter of Proverbs—and cleared my throat.

"'Who can find a virtuous woman?'" I read, "'for her price is far above rubies. The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil. She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life. She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands. She is like the merchants' ships; she bringeth her food from afar. She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens. She considereth a field and buyeth it; with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard. She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms. She perceiveth that her merchandise is good; her candle goeth not out by night. She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff. . . . She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the

## THE EARTHQUAKE

bread of idleness. Her children arise up and call her blessed: her husband also, and he praiseth her. Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all.'

"Thou excellest them all!" I repeated softly.

"Oh, John!" murmured Helen, and a blush flickered prettily for a moment upon her cheek. "Don't you think you might get a little tired of a woman quite as competent as all that?"

### III

#### MY FRIENDS

“The End of worldly life awaits us all:  
Let him who may, gain honor ere death.”

We were just getting up from breakfast the Monday morning after our return to New York when the door-bell rang and our old friend Kenneth Adams came in, pale and agitated.

“What’s the matter, Ken?” asked Helen. “Did your cook spoil the coffee?”

“No,” he replied nervously. “We haven’t any cook—but that’s not my trouble. Lucy’s got appendicitis—at least that is what young Hopkins says, and I haven’t any reason to doubt his word. He says she ought to be operated on immediately.”

“What a shame!” said Helen. “Still, she’ll be ever so much better without it. Of course the operation isn’t pleasant, but once her appendix is out——”

“Yes, but who’s going to *take* it out?” demanded Kenneth.

“What’s the matter with McCook?” I inquired, with callous levity. “He’s supposed to be our best local excavator, isn’t he?”

“McCook? He’s been in Paris for two years and a half!”

## THE EARTHQUAKE

"Oh, yes, I remember," I admitted. "So he has. How about Furness?—he's one of the 'Big Four.' "

"Furness sailed with the Fordyce Unit last spring. He's on the firing-line."

"Well, Jameson then. One is about as good as another."

"Jameson's gone, too."

"Farley?"

"Farley's down in Washington—he's a major, I believe—helping on some advisory medical board."

"By George!" I ejaculated with more sympathy. "Some medical exodus—*what?*"

"I'm at my wits' end!" declared Adams. "All the big operators have gone away. I've called up hospital after hospital, doctor's office after doctor's office, and they all tell me the same thing—Dr. So-and-So has been away since June or July in 1914—or whatever the fact is."

"But what's the matter with Freylingheusen?" I queried. "I saw him at the theatre the other night."

"Freylingheusen?" retorted Adams bitterly. "Why, he's a thousand years old! Appendicitis wasn't even invented when *he* went to the medical school. I wouldn't trust him to cut up *cat meat*, let alone my wife. I tell you I'm up against it!"

"But the hospitals can't be absolutely denuded," I insisted. "Surely you can get *some one*——"

"*Some one*—yes. But would you want just *some*

## MY FRIENDS

*one* to operate on Helen here? The hospital staffs have been just about cut in half, and the fellows that are left are the young ones nobody ever heard of."

He wiped the sweat from his forehead.

"I don't know what to do!" he groaned. "Hopkins keeps assuring me that the operation is a perfectly simple one and that nobody thinks anything of it at all these days. 'Only five per cent mortality,' he says. Think of telling me that. 'Mortality'—nice word to have a surgeon chuck at you! He suggests I should engage a Hebrew friend of his named Oppenheim—sounds like a novelist!—but I have an idea that he really wants to do the operation himself."

"Well, why don't you let him?"

"Hopkins? Nonsense!"

"Why?"

"Why—he's too young for one thing. He's all right as a sort of general practitioner——"

"How old is he?"

Adams hesitated.

"I—don't—know," he answered slowly. "Come to think of it, he must be well over forty."

"Well," I retorted. "If he's ever going to be old enough to operate I should think he would be now. Why don't you let him?"

My friend waved a frenzied hand.

"I wouldn't let him touch Lucy with a ten-foot pole. I won't have an inexperienced man slashing

## THE EARTHQUAKE

up my wife. I want the biggest surgeon there is—and he'd be none too good. There must be some one—even in another city."

Helen had arisen and had been standing looking out into the sunlit yard of the day-school in our rear. Now she turned and laid her hand on Kenneth's arm.

"Listen, Kenneth!" she admonished him. "I know exactly how you feel and I'm awfully sorry about Lucy—but things aren't as bad as they seem just at this moment. We've been away and haven't kept in touch, but perhaps we can understand all the better. Now, from what you say it would appear that most of the well-known surgeons have gone away—to France, or Washington, or medical reserve officers' camps. However, the hospitals are still manned and equipped. The big men all have to die off some time. There are always others just as good—or practically so—to fill their places. I've heard both Oppenheim and Hopkins very well spoken of. Why don't you try one of them?"

But Kenneth shook his head gloomily.

"No," he retorted. "Nobody but the biggest man in the business is going to operate on *my* wife! I thought maybe I'd overlooked some one and that you might be able to suggest a name. But I'll have to try elsewhere. There must be some crackerjack surgeon who *hasn't* gone."

## MY FRIENDS

"What do you suppose other people will do?" I asked rather impatiently.

"I don't know what they'll do," he declared wildly. "What's that to me? That's an entirely different matter, isn't it?" He got up, removed his hat from the table where he had laid it, and took a step toward the door without offering to shake hands. "There must be *some* one!" he kept repeating.

"Try Oppenheim," urged Helen.

"A fellow I never heard of!" he almost shouted. "I'd rather have Hopkins!"

He turned and hurried out into the front hall, mumbling to himself. The door slammed and I saw his shadow fall across the window.

"Poor Kenneth!" sighed Helen. "I don't blame him for being nervous about Lucy, but, really, don't you think there is a touch of egotism about his insistence upon his surgical rights? It isn't as if there were no surgeons capable of taking out Lucy's appendix. And, honestly, her appendix isn't any more valuable than anybody's else."

"Of course it isn't!" I answered. "The luxury, or at any rate the comfort, most of us have enjoyed in America has given us an artificial sense of our own physical importance. Because we want things for ourselves they have got to be better than what are quite good enough for other people, who are used to getting in line and taking what is handed out to them. *We*

## THE EARTHQUAKE

must have the best seats at the theatre, the corner suite at the hotel, and a private stateroom on the Pullman——”

“The choicest cuts of beef, the most expensive automobiles, the richest man in town to marry our daughter, and the most famous surgeon in the country to operate on us. Well, it isn’t going to be so any longer. There aren’t going to be any favorites. First come will be first served—and maybe the last will go without.”

“I see where *we* have simply got to keep *well!*” I remarked.

Helen laughed.

“I forbid you to have appendicitis,” she said.

I had not been to my office since the eventful day of our return, having availed myself of my partner’s suggestion that I should get my domestic affairs in order before bothering my head about business. The task of readjusting those affairs to the new conditions in which we found ourselves had proved far less difficult than I had anticipated. For example, save for the fact that we were unable to take our customary Sunday afternoon run into the country I should not have noticed the absence of our motor. We had not as yet had time to ascertain who of our friends had returned to town and we had all been so busy that the influence of the war had hardly made itself felt; save



## MY FRIENDS

for the necessity of the comparatively trifling economies we had inaugurated.

As I walked down-town I was struck by the profusion of "To Let" and "For Sale" signs displayed upon both sides of the street. In place of the previous scattering few, they now everywhere thrust themselves upon one's notice. At the apartment-house on the corner I found that they had replaced the elevator men with women. Two military service motors passed me driven by young ladies in khaki, and I observed with interest two little girls delivering telegrams. I wasn't looking for war signs. In fact, my attitude had been rather one of scepticism. Apart from the slump in my own business I had as yet seen no reflection of war in actual conditions. Business seemed to be going on as usual, and Fifth Avenue had never been so crowded with motors. However, I encountered Jim Lockwood, and farther along Horace Gibson, both men of about my age and in uniform, taking their small girls to school, and wondered what sort of military service they were engaged in. Between Seventy-second and Thirty-fourth Streets I passed or overtook, by actual count, twenty-seven men in army or navy uniforms—before nine o'clock—and at Sixtieth Street I heard a humming like that of a gigantic cockchafer and, looking overhead, saw a monoplane sailing across Central Park, going west toward Jersey. Mind you, if I had been in New York right along I

## THE EARTHQUAKE

probably shouldn't have paid any attention to these phenomena, but I had been away, practically asleep on a sugar-plantation, for nearly ten months, and everything—as the saying is—"hit me between the eyes." That aeroplane particularly! A year ago the whirr of its propeller would have brought every housemaid out into the street within the radius of three miles, and now—nobody paid the slightest attention to it!

Along Fifth Avenue in the course of my walk of only two miles I saw innumerable service-flags, the stars running from one to five in private houses and as high as fifty or sixty on one or two of the largest stores. The sidewalks, of course, were just as full of people as ever, but there, before my eyes, was the tangible evidence that at least a regiment of men had gone to the front from the immediate neighborhood. Two crowded buses containing a company of negro guardsmen came out of Fifty-seventh Street and turned up Fifth Avenue without attracting more than a casual glance from the pedestrians. In the Subway I read the notice that the Interborough Railroad had lost no less than twelve hundred and sixty employees on account of enlistment. Three officers in uniform in adjacent seats to my own, going down-town, seemed to excite no interest. But when I reached the Bridge and, emerging upon Broadway, perceived the huge service-flag of the New York Telephone Company

## MY FRIENDS

with its more than six thousand stars I grasped, for the first time, the reality of the thing. For every man a star—for every star a hero! What a host of them! What a glory.

Somehow my eyes grew moist at the vision of those hundreds of boys—round-shouldered, pasty-faced, undernourished—chaps you wouldn't have credited with any particular idealism—whose chief interest you would have assumed to be an evening spent at the movies with some gum-chewing, muddy-complexioned girl—now stumping along with set faces to the whistle of the fife under the Stars and Stripes. Youthful cynics, most of them, sophisticated to the ways of business and of politics, suspicious of motives, creedless, churchless, rebellious to authority, sceptics. What had sent them? What had sent my Jack? For answer the inscription upon the monument in "Soldier's Field" at Harvard floated across the curling folds of the great flag with its myriad of stars:

"Though love repine and reason chafe,  
There comes a voice without reply:  
"Twere man's perdition to be safe  
When for the Truth he ought to die!"

Below Fulton Street the city was all aflutter with flags, and many motors passed in both directions driven by or carrying officers. It occurred to me that, as I was in his neighborhood, I would drop in on Fred

## THE EARTHQUAKE

Hawkins, the senior member of the firm of Hawkins, Ludlow & Fowler, who attended to our law business when we were unfortunate enough to have any. To my surprise I noticed that the name on the door now read merely "Ludlow & Fowler." The clerk in the outer office informed me that Mr. Hawkins was away, but that Mr. Ludlow would be glad to see me in the library, where he was working.

"How d'you do, Stanton?" he exclaimed cordially, holding out his hand. "Why, no, Hawkins hasn't been with us since last May. He went over with Pershing; he was very lucky—got a major's commission on the judge-advocate general's staff."

"Isn't he a bit over age?" I inquired, finding it difficult to imagine my rather elderly attorney in epaulets. "And hasn't he got several children?"

"He's fifty-one," conceded Ludlow. "But his wife has a little money of her own and the three children are all away at school. I think they spend most of their vacations at their grandmother's, anyhow. But that wouldn't have made any difference. Fred began to get uneasy long before the war actually started. He's a sentimental cuss, sort of mediæval and romantic—inherited a chivalric side from his mother's family—she was part French, you know. The day after the declaration he simply walked in here and said: 'Well, boys, I'm off for the war.' And he went. He'd had his pipes all laid for some

## MY FRIENDS

time. Nothing would have stopped him. We offered to keep the firm together for him, but he said he'd rather resign and be foot-free. So he just chucked the whole thing up and now it's 'Ludlow & Fowler.' ”

“Of course I'd have heard, only I've been away,” said I in explanation of my ignorance. “I suppose I'll find a lot of my other friends gone.”

“Rather!” he returned. “I tell you there's a big hole in this town below Fulton Street. The last men in the world you would have thought of! Gone across—or down to Washington or on some mission—left their jobs and just hiked right out. Take the bar—there are so many of 'em gone that we've had to form a big committee of lawyers to hold their practice together for them.”

“How is the law business?” I inquired politely.

“Rotten!” he grinned. “But what do you expect? There isn't any other business—except *war* business—to be any *law* business about.”

“I know that the surgeons are pretty well cleaned out,” said I, thinking of Ken Adams and his appendicitis case.

“Oh, there aren't any surgeons!” he agreed. “You'd be lucky to get anybody to treat you for mumps. If the general health wasn't so much better than usual—from cutting out rich grub and rum—I don't know what we'd do. Glad to have seen you.

## THE EARTHQUAKE

If you *should* have any law business, don't forget us!"

"I shan't have any law business," I answered grimly, "or any other kind around here, I guess, from the looks of things."

The Petroleum National Bank was on the next block on my way to the office and I paused at the cashier's desk to inquire the amount of my balance. Behind a glass partition I could see Rumsey Prall, the president, sitting in state at his mahogany desk, and after getting my information I pushed my way through the brass rail and went in to speak to him.

"Hello, Stanton!" he said, drawing me into a chair. "Haven't seen you for a dog's age. Where you been—Paris?"

I shook my head.

"Not much!" I retorted. "I've been dreaming away nearly a year in the Pacific."

He looked at me with open incredulity.

"That's a funny safe place to have been!" he ejaculated.

"So I've just discovered," I replied. "It seems that quite a little has happened since I left here. By the way, where's Jim Rogers, your vice-president?"

"Rogers is running the Red Cross over on the other side," he answered. "They needed a big man, so we had to let him go. Phillips, our third vice, has gone,

## MY FRIENDS

too. He's in Washington, though. Seen our service-flag? Forty-seven stars on it!" he added proudly.

On the corner of Wall Street I ran into Allston Hopkins dressed as a captain, walking with his son Sam, who was in the uniform of an ensign in the navy. Hopkins is a civil engineer with an international reputation, who earns, it is said, two or three hundred thousand dollars a year. He nodded to me, evidently not aware that I had been away.

"Going across?" I asked over my shoulder as I passed.

"I've been over and back five times already," he said. "Just got my boy a job!"

"Good luck to you!" I called after them.

Already I had an unpleasant feeling of being a sort of outsider—as if all about me there was some mystic circle to which I did not have the password—a brotherhood of which I was not a member.

There were all kinds of uniforms on Wall Street, and several French and Canadian officers were strolling along watching the crowds and looking at the Stock Exchange. Suddenly an old woman carrying a string-bag full of bundles pushed her way through the crowd to where a French captain in an army cape was standing before a show-window. She was shabbily dressed and her gray hair was far from tidy, but her eyes were shining and there was an almost reverential expression on her wrinkled face as she timidly touched

## THE EARTHQUAKE

him upon the arm. He turned and, seeing her eager look, raised his cap, as she held out her hand:

"I just can't help shaking hands with you!" she cried tremulously, and with little tears of excitement in her eyes. "Do you mind? We can't ever thank you enough."

"*C'est avec plaisir, madame, que je vous remercie pour l'honneur fait à mes compatriotes—au nom de la France,*" and he bent over the little hand with a bow that would have done credit to a nobleman of the *ancien régime*, while the little old woman, quite flustered, looked up and then down and, as if abashed at her own temerity, hurried on lest some one should see her. The Frenchman stood gazing after her with his cap still raised in air for several seconds while the crowd swept round him—a gentle smile about his eyes. I couldn't help it—I, too, stepped up and laid my hand on his arm:

"*Je veux vous remercier aussi!*" I said, smiling. "*Nous voulons tous vous remercier!*"

Like a flash he gave me the salute.

"*Mes compliments, m'sieur!*" he responded; then glancing tenderly in the direction of the little figure almost lost in the crowd: "*Ah, cette petite dame agée me fait penser à ma chère grand'mère à Falaise!*"

The recollection of that brief scene stayed with me all day. I think of it occasionally even now. I am glad that old lady did not restrain her impulse to show



## MY FRIENDS

her appreciation in the only way she could of what France has done for us and for the world.

At the office I found that my partner Lord had already been in for a few moments, looked over his mail, and hurried out again. Miss Peterson said that he had just made an unexpected sale of some bonds and had gone over to the vaults personally to superintend delivery. This was news no less grateful than it was surprising. Perhaps business was looking up again!

Not having anything in particular to do, I started in making a short list of the men I thought I should like to see and chat with during the course of the day, for under my doctor's orders I had done no letter-writing while on my vacation and looked forward with a good deal of pleasurable anticipation to renewing the old intimacies and hearing what my former cronies had to say for themselves. I jotted down some twenty names and told Miss Peterson to call up their offices and see whether they were in town. Half an hour later she laid the slip on my desk with the notes which she had made. I will give no names, but merely the occupation and whereabouts of twelve out of the twenty of my former down-town associates:

———, Bank President: Acting as assistant to Secretary of the Treasury in Washington.

———, Manufacturer: Member of National Council of Defense in Washington.

## THE EARTHQUAKE

- , Lawyer: Major, Military Intelligence, Washington.
- , Lawyer: Member Special Commission to Russia.
- , Vice-President of —— Trust Company: Red Cross executive in Paris.
- , Capitalist: Y. M. C. A. executive in Paris.
- , Editor: Allied War Relief in Paris.
- , Manufacturer: Member of War Industries Board, Washington.
- , Dealer in Railroad Supplies: Gone to Russia on business for United States Government.
- , Lawyer: Executive in Food Administration, Chicago.
- , Stock Broker: Major, Ordnance Department, France.
- , Lawyer: Lieutenant-Colonel, National Army, Fort Myer.

Of the twenty there were only eight remaining in New York! Now it may well be that, had I extended my list to a hundred names I would have found only a few additional absentees. I do not know. What struck me was that of the twenty men I most wanted to see on my return to New York, a majority had offered their services to their country in spite of the fact that they were all above military age, all prominent in affairs, most of them earning large salaries. They had abandoned their careers gladly without, apparently, a moment's hesitation, simply because they thought it was the thing to do. It didn't, and it doesn't, seem to me particularly important to know what proportion of one's *entire acquaintance* are responding to the call of duty; but it *is* important to know what proportion of the twenty men one regards as most worth while are doing so. If I had confined

## MY FRIENDS

myself to the first ten names, I should have found only three of my friends who were not working for the government.

There was nothing doing in the office and I put on my hat and went out into the street again. As I looked back at our front windows I observed for the first time that we had a small service-flag of our own with three blue stars on it. Somehow it gave me a feeling of encouragement. I wondered if everybody's business was as hard hit as my own.

The streets seemed to be just as crowded as ever with people hurrying along about their manifold affairs. The only difference was in the amount of bunting displayed everywhere and the posters, some old and torn, and others fresh and new, that adorned every hoarding, wall, and empty barrel. Many of them were artistic and their legends inspiring. Side by side with posters upon which were displayed the Stars and Stripes were others with the Union Jack and the banner of St. George calling upon all loyal Englishmen and Canadians in the United States to enlist under their own flag: "Britishers—Enlist to-day!" "British blood calls British blood! Sons of Britain join your army here—enlist now!"

One poster especially gripped my imagination—the figure of a marine in khaki, one foot advanced, standing in front of the flag, his left fist clinched and in his right a pistol, with a look of dogged determination

## THE EARTHQUAKE

upon his bronzed face. "First in the Fight—Always Faithful!" Two other posters showed our boys in khaki charging up a hill, bearing the flag, and another a group, similar to that in the familiar painting, inscribed "Spirit of 1917." That was it! The Spirit of 1917! I had been accustomed to growl at English stupidity and bad manners, to scoff at French laxity and frivolity; now the sight of French and English uniforms among the crowd and the French and English colors juxtaposed with my own sent a fine glow through my veins. This was a new world I had come back into! A bigger world—a world of the spirit—the spirit of 1917! My blood tingled at the thought that even if I wasn't going to be among the first to fight for freedom, Jack was! I was exalted by a patriotic fervor stimulated by these flags and posters. I yearned to go and do something myself—right off—"now"—"to-day"—not at a desk in some administrative building but with a rifle over my shoulder, the smell of powder in the air, and my feet on the muddy turf.

Then I gloomily realized that if my heart were young, my arteries were old! Nevertheless, I assured myself, they were not so old as Joffre's by nearly twenty years! Or Cadorna's! As far as fitness went I believed that I was perfectly sound—the only difference was that under a prolonged strain I wouldn't last as long probably as a younger chap—a purely theoretic-

## MY FRIENDS

cal limitation. To every intent and purpose I was as vigorous as my son. After all, I was really a young man. I had climbed Fusiamma only eight months before, had tramped for days through the Philippines and the *Islas Adjacentes*, and every year of the last ten I had hunted either Rocky Mountain sheep or elk among the Shoshones. I was as hard as nails, undicted in excess to alcohol or tobacco, could carry a sixty-pound pack for hours along a New Brunswick portage or tote my half of a canoe with any French-Canadian voyageur. No, I was all right! Yet, here I was wandering around Wall Street!

It was almost with relief—a sensation of needed vindication—that I found myself being warmly shaken by the hand by Arthur Pulham, a stock-broking friend of mine with offices on the ground floor of a Broad Street building. He is a big, husky chap about forty-three years old, with pink cheeks, weighs nearly two hundred pounds, and has shoulders like Samson's. He spends his summers sailing a racing-yacht on Narragansett Bay and always goes tarpon-fishing in the spring—a crank about outdoor life, with a keen sense of the value of money—who, in spite of a curious pantheistic materialism, had a lot of good points, and whom I could count on in trouble as a friend.

"Well! Well! John!" he cried heartily. "You back! I *am* glad to see you! Tell me all about yourself! How is Helen? And the boy? Oh, of course,

## THE EARTHQUAKE

he'd be with the colors! Great luck for the lad, eh? Wish *I* was his age! Come around to the office and smoke a cigar?"

I was glad to see him and, having nothing to do, followed him into the customer's room, which was filled with a heterogeneous crowd lounging in chairs in front of a quotation-board. The market was active and depressed and prices were changing with great rapidity. Pulham pushed me into his private office and pulled to the door. Then he shoved toward me a box of expensive cigars, helped himself to one, lighted it, and leaned back comfortably in his arm-chair.

"Well, old man!" he repeated. "I sure am glad to see you once more! How do you find business?"

"Isn't any," I answered, smiling. "But from the look of things outside there you don't seem to be troubled that way."

He took a satisfied pull on his cigar.

"No," he said, "business is pretty good! Pretty, pretty good!" He leaned toward me confidentially.

"You see," he imparted to me with a tremor of egotism which he could not conceal, "I doped this all out nearly two years ago. In the first place, all my people got in on the 'War Babies'—Bethlehem Steel, Crucible, General Motors, and so on—and then I had a hunch that, whether the war lasted much longer or not, there would be some bad times and I told every-

## MY FRIENDS

body to sell. In a word, we were bears when war was declared and we've been bears ever since. A fellow can't lose in this market—all he's got to do is to sell a few thousand short with his eyes shut—that is, if he has a little real courage."

"A little real courage!" I half murmured. Was it the cigar-smoke that made me feel queer? Pulham didn't notice.

"It's the only *sure* way to make money," he continued. "Business conditions are terrible! The railroads are in a shocking state! It's criminal the way the commission is treating 'em. It's bound to mean government ownership sooner or later. It's a safe bet to sell this market from now on."

"But all business isn't so bad, is it?" I inquired, more to make conversation than anything.

"I should say not. The money some fellows have made is enough to make you *sick—positively sick!* I know one that has made twenty millions since August, 1914."

"*Twenty* millions!"

"Tw-en-ty! Count 'em! Any number of fellows have just coined it—all luck, of course—just happened to be in the right thing—chemicals, rubber, machinery, munitions. There's a chap up-stairs who was doing business in 1914 with one room and an office boy. Now he has the *whole floor*—twenty-two offices. Literal truth! Some expansion—what?"

## THE EARTHQUAKE

"Where is Dixon?" I asked, looking through the office door of the adjoining office.

"Dixon? Left us. Gone across to France in the Red Cross."

"That's fine!" said I warmly.

"Yes—fine!" he echoed. "Splendid, isn't it, the way the fellows are volunteering? Everybody's doing something, you know! Even those who can't find a job in Washington are doing their bit right here at home—one way or another—Liberty Loan, Y. M. C. A., Red Cross, or something. I'd give my eyes to go across if only I was the right age. But they don't want us old fellows on the other side!"

"I suppose you could have gone to Plattsburg and got an officer's commission, couldn't you?" I hazarded.

"Oh, possibly," he acceded with a slight frown, "but there's the family! You can't go and leave a wife and five children, now, can you? Besides," he hurried on without giving me a chance to reply, "I've tried my best to get a job where what ability I have can be utilized, but I can't find a place, to save my life. I've tried the War Department, the Navy Department, and written to Hoover, but all any of 'em can offer me is some clerical work that an office boy could do. Now, if they'd put me on a commission——"

I held my peace.

"You don't know how hard I've worked to find a chance to do something—anything to help!" he pro-



## MY FRIENDS

tested with even more earnestness than the occasion would seem to have demanded.

And then over his desk I noticed for the first time that poster of Uncle Sam pointing an accusing finger and saying: "I want *you*!"

"No," I admitted truthfully. "I don't suppose I do."

As I strolled back to my own offices the sunlight seemed to be a shade less bright than earlier in the day. There was Hawkins—a leader of the bar—who had thrown up a career and certainly not less than thirty thousand a year—and right across the street one of his best friends was making money hand over fist!

I found that Lord had not yet returned, and as it was nearly lunch-time I called up John Sedgewick and asked if my old lunch club was still going. He answered that it was, only there were now but nine members instead of fourteen as formerly, and they no longer took a private room but sat at a round table in the regular dining-room of the Noonday Club. He was just going over, he said. Wouldn't I join him?

It was one o'clock as I entered, and I was rather surprised to find so few members about. Before I went away it had been always crowded to overflowing at that hour, but now there were plenty of empty tables. Old Thomas, the decrepit doorman, greeted me warmly, if sadly.

## THE EARTHQUAKE

"You'll find things a good deal changed, Mr. Stanton," he sighed. "It's very hard for us to get good boys any more in the coat-room. And it's the same way with the waiters. They're just a lot of push-cart men. The club isn't what it was. This war's an awful thing, sir. My daughter's husband, he got blinded last July—he was a Canadian, you know, sir, and he would go back and enlist!"

I patted him on the shoulder and passed on to hang up my coat and hat. What could I say? Sedgewick was waiting for me and we went up-stairs and took our seats at the club table. One or two men were already there, and the others gradually drifted in. In different parts of the room I counted four members in uniform. It gave me a jolt to see Hibben, the club raconteur, who always had a crowd of jovial fellows at his elbow, in the blue jacket of a lieutenant in the navy, talking earnestly to an artilleryman whom I recognized as Charley Hackett, heretofore an utterly irresponsible bounder, whose matrimonial and other difficulties had given him a good deal of rather unpleasant notoriety. I couldn't quite bring myself to accept the thing as real. It was as if they were acting charades or had stepped out of a rehearsal of private theatricals to get a bite of lunch. When, however, Fred Thomas, the promoter, one of our own group, came in and sat down with us in the uniform of a second lieutenant it began to have a tinge of actuality.

## MY FRIENDS

"You look fine, Fred!" I exclaimed with genuine pleasure at the sight of his trim military figure.

"Well," he drawled, "I begin to feel better."

"Been laid up?" I asked sympathetically.

"Oh, no!" he retorted carelessly. "My health's been all right enough. You'll understand after you've been back awhile. It's just a feeling—half restlessness, half ennui. A kind of soul disease, I guess. Nothing around here seems worth doing. Hanging around Wall Street these days is like playing penny-ante when there's a Harvard-Yale football game going on in the next lot. It doesn't have the interest it otherwise might, you know."

"That's so!" agreed Kessler, the banker across the table, a man of over sixty. "I don't know what we fellows that aren't doing anything are coming to. I can't get up the slightest excitement over what used to thrill me to the marrow. I don't care whether we make money or lose it. Damn it all, I don't care about anything any more—except to tear the hide off those Germans!"

"Everybody feels the same way," said Sedgewick. "What possible difference does it make whether you make money or not, or I win a case or not, when our friends and our sons and our brothers are going off to be shot up or gassed? You might just as well expect a man calmly to sit and play checkers in the parlor while a burglar was chloroforming his wife up-

## THE EARTHQUAKE

stairs preparatory to going through the family safe. Some of us *have* to stay here, but the curse of the thing is that those of us who do can never explain *why*. We'll be classed with the swine that are making money out of it! God, some of these fellows make me think of a man watching his sister fighting for her honor with a tramp and trying to sell a chance to take a picture of it to a movie concern! And, by the Lord, they hope (damn them!) that she'll last until the camera gets there!"

He threw down his soup-spoon and glared around the table. I had never seen the wizened little lawyer under such emotional stress.

"Oh, forget 'em!" recommended Thomas. "Try and think only of us heroes!" he added with humorous sarcasm. "Of course it's rotten to make an opportunity out of another chap's extremity—and pretty nearly treason to take advantage of national adversity—a man who sells the market short at such a time as this ought to be taken out in front of the Mint and shot—but, after all, somebody's got to keep the show going at home and a chap mustn't get the idea that, just because he'd rather like to wear shoulder-straps and get credit for a willingness to give his life for his country, Pershing can't get along without him. I used to get my living by making a whole lot of people think they wanted to buy something for about twice what somebody else was willing to sell it for. Now I'm free

## MY FRIENDS

to satisfy the cravings of my imagination. I shall probably sit on a pier and count boxes of bully beef for two or three years and curse the day I was bitten by the bug of bravery. But suppose I was the editor of a paper or a magazine with an audience as big as the whole country. Is there any doubt but that, if I exerted my influence in the right direction, I could do literally a million times more good than if I counted those boxes or ripped up a German's abdomen with a bayonet?"

"Of course!" "Quite right!" "Sure!" agreed several of the others.

"Well," continued Rogers with emphasis. "My point is this. *That* editor has no business to enlist or to chuck up his job. He belongs where he is. If he volunteered it wouldn't be because he honestly thought he could serve his country better, but because he was afraid that people would think he was a slacker. In a word, he'd be a coward—nothing else! Now *I* say that the really brave man—the patriot—is the chap that's big enough to endure the censure of public opinion and keep right on working, when instead of a chance for the *croix de guerre*, all he's got a chance of getting is a kick in the pants!"

"Hear! Hear!" cried old Kessler bitterly. "I'd rather you'd say that in uniform than some other fellow in tennis trousers. Don't preach that doctrine too loud or the country will be swamped with

## THE EARTHQUAKE

self-abnegators crucified to their present nice little jobs!"

"It's the truth all the same!" shot back Thomas defiantly. "For example, the worst danger we have got to face is the undermining of our national morale. Unless we stamp out sedition here at home—and somebody's got to stay here and attend to it—we shall just ship our boys over into a shambles that will go on forever."

"Say, you fellows! Cut it out, will you!" requested Robinson, a cotton-broker, who had two sons in France, turning a rather ghastly hue. "This war stuff is all right, but, after all, it's lunch-time. Here, waiter! Bring us our coffee and some of those new domestic cigars that only cost twelve cents apiece."

Our party broke up a few minutes later and I found to my amazement that it was only half after one. Formerly we had spent an hour or more over the table. Indeed, it had always taken nearly an hour to serve the three or four courses that we inevitably had had—our oysters, soup, entrée, and dessert. But I observed that to-day, with but two exceptions, the men had ordered only soup and corn-bread, or "crackers and milk" and pie, or some light dish of that sort, and although we had lingered as long as we wished, we were through in half the usual time. Down in the hall I picked up Thomas again and invited him to smoke another cigarette before going away.

## MY FRIENDS

"You can't understand how this, my first morning down-town in nearly a year, has got under my skin," I told him. "Everything's different!"

"Of course it is!" he replied. "*We're* different, too—a good many of us. But there are a lot of us who aren't—yet. I suppose it takes people a long time to wake up—get going. It took England just as long, they say. But, my God, man! This nation as a nation isn't plunging into war! It's *wading* in, one foot at a time! We're about up to our ankles, all nice and dry up above. Wait till an ice-cold roller hits us!"

"It's hit me already," I hastened to assure him. "You see I've come back to these things all at once, while the rest of you have had plenty of time to get used to them gradually. You seem to have thought a lot about it all."

"Yes," he said, "I have. More than I ever thought about anything else in my life before. It came over me all at once. It doesn't matter what started it. That's personal. I've seen it in a lot of other men, too. You're sort of getting ready for it without knowing it—and then it breaks on you suddenly—like Paul when he walked unexpectedly into the celestial spotlight. I feel now as if I had a sort of mission to go around preaching—but, of course, I can't. Yet the fierce part of it is that there's generally no fair way to tell whether a man is a slacker or not—and all the swine take advantage of that fact."

## THE EARTHQUAKE

"But you're looking at it only from the point of view of trying to pillory the cowards," I cautioned him. "Why not look at it from the other side and be glad that the war has brought forward so many men one would never have suspected of being the right stuff. Why, my regard for human nature has gone up a thousand per cent in the past three hours!"

He looked at me intently for several moments.

"By George! You're right," he answered finally. "And this war has done a tremendous amount for a lot of us fellows who didn't know we needed it. Take my own case. I was a successful man. You know that, Stanton. I made three hundred thousand dollars in 1913. I've got a knack for it. I can make money any time. And I've been doing the things that fellows like me do—playing golf for a hundred dollars a hole and racing around over the country in big motor-cars and giving my wife all the money to put into clothes and jewelry she wanted and all that. I thought it was fine! Well, when this war came along I saw men whose abilities and bank-accounts were ten times as big as mine letting the whole business slide. Why, you know —, he's given up a hundred-thousand-dollar salary to go down to Washington for a dollar a year! There are dozens of 'em. They didn't seem to think the money amounted to a row of pins. It set me thinking. Was it? I asked myself. What was my kind of success worth if fellows



## MY FRIENDS

just tossed it away like that when something bigger came along? Then it occurred to me that, war or no war, there were bigger things coming along *all the time*. Get me? It's fine to drive the boches out of Belgium, but it would be fine, too, to drive poverty and crime and disease out of America! It was an *absolutely new* idea to me. Yet John D. has had it all the time! Give the old man his due. And little John, too! And if it's worth throwing away your fortune—and your life, maybe—for one good cause, it's worth while throwing 'em away for another; see?"

I nodded. This was queer stuff for a Wall Street promoter to put across after a midday lunch at the club—stuff that was a little too abstract for my mood. Here was Rogers making plans for what he was going to do after the war—if he wasn't killed—while I——!

"That's a pretty fine idea, Rogers!" I agreed. "But no matter what they do hereafter I must say that it seems to me that the rich have done themselves proud so far in this war! They've given their sons and themselves and poured out their money like coal running down a chute without a quiver!"

"You bet!" he assented. "This war has rehabilitated the malefactor of great wealth. It's a funny thing. When I was a boy 'riches and honor' were more or less synonymous. But latterly in America the possessors of great fortunes have found them-

## THE EARTHQUAKE

selves more or less objects of suspicion. Ever since the insurance investigation and the good old muck-raking days the millionaire has been under a cloud. If he gave away a couple of millions to a hospital or a college he was always charged with trying to buy an honorary degree or salve his conscience, and the directors of the institution he was trying to help were accused of receiving stolen goods. 'Tainted money!' A million dollars, I guess, always carries a slight guilty feeling along with it! No one can *earn* a million dollars. I always felt that way about my promotion profits! That, I suppose, is the significance of the word *fortune*. Until recently the puzzle of the rich has been how to get rid of their money with honor. Now they've got their chance. They're taking advantage of it, too. They're unloading it on Uncle Sam—and Belgium—and France—and Poland. They're all right!"

"Of course," I interjected, "the rich can afford to do it. They've got the money to give. And a lot of 'em won't miss it so very much at that!"

"True," he answered. "But they're *giving* it, aren't they? You don't belittle the act of the fireman who saves a woman because he happens to be a fireman and to have the ladder. The rich were lucky to have the money. Let's give 'em credit for giving it away. I tell you this war is going to make the rich respectable again. They had lost caste. They were

## MY FRIENDS

going down. It gave 'em a chance to get back. But apart from the giving of money, the rich haven't been behind the poor in offering to serve under the flag either. Oh, this war is doing a lot to wipe out the distrust of wealth. And the real underlying reason is that it's teaching the fellows who have made the money that it isn't of very much use to them unless they do something with it that's worth while for everybody else."

"There won't be much class feeling left when we get through, I fancy," I dared to assert. "With the poor man's boy and the capitalist's son fighting side by side they'll find out each other's good points and they'll remember them when they come back. The 'brotherhood of man' will mean something. It's the soldier's 'choice of honor rather than life' that will make them all gentlemen together, and they won't stand for seeing the ideals they bled for going by the board. They'll fight for them at home, just as they did in France!"

"What you say about the 'choice of honor rather than life' is very true," he returned thoughtfully. "What a wonderful thing it is that every man of us has the same opportunity for the supreme sacrifice! The same great prize—the same immortal glory! It makes no difference whether a fellow has made a success or failure of his life up to this time, he has the same chance as anybody else—to give all he's got.

## THE EARTHQUAKE

And nobody can give more. He's the equal in that respect of the greatest genius or statesman in the land! If you asked me who were the happiest men around to-day I should unhesitatingly reply, 'the failures.' This war is the opportunity of the unsuccessful. No matter how much a man may have fozzled his life, he can retrieve himself by a single act—in the twinkling of an eye. When a chap dies out on No Man's Land nobody is going to ask whether he made money or not before the war. They won't inquire whether he lived well or ill. Whatever his past may have been, he will have atoned for all his sins."

He took a long breath surcharged with tobacco.

"The other evening at the club I happened to ask after half a dozen rather notorious 'ne'er-do-wells' of my acquaintance, and learned that every one was, or had been, at the front. One was chasing submarines in the North Sea in command of his own converted yacht—in danger every moment of being torpedoed—two others, men of over fifty, were driving ambulances on the firing-line, three had joined the Lafayette Escadrille and were risking their lives daily in the air, and the last—Thompson—had died at the head of his men leading a charge at Neuve Chapelle.

"Poor old Thompson!' I said.

"'Lucky old Thompson, you mean!' retorted the fellow I was talking with. There were bitter tears in

## MY FRIENDS

his eyes. 'I was going with him—only—dammit—my bad heart threw me out!'"

As I threaded my way through the crowd back to the office I realized the truth of what Rogers had said. This *was* the salvation of the failure.

How many fellows we have known who in another age might have risen to supreme heights, through strength or bravery, but who for one reason or another didn't fit into the scheme of modern life! Either they have plodded dumbly along, making failure after failure in business or at the professions, or have hung about doing nothing, if not actually engaged in dissipation. They had no place on a city pavement between rows of brown-stone dwellings. Theirs was the realm of sea and sky—gentlemen adventurers, buccaneers—cavemen, if you choose. Now they have come into their own. They have found themselves. They can follow the gleam over the "uttermost purple rim." They can challenge the rest of mankind in bravery. Good luck to them!

So, likewise, the war has opened the eyes of the successful man. It has suddenly jarred him into the realization that after twenty or thirty years of toiling he has really no more to offer his country than his totally unsuccessful brother. He is up against the eternal verities. Once he has on khaki and faces the probability that at the same time next year he will be

## THE EARTHQUAKE

lying under a little wooden cross on the outskirts of some village of northern France, he will wonder, if he never wondered before, whether his so-called success was worth the price he paid for it. He will see things in their true relation to one another. He will wish devoutly that he had lived more as he went along and less in anticipation, and he will envy the poor devil that he used to scorn because he only earned a couple of thousand dollars a year, although he had a jolly good time doing it. But, success or failure, they are all coming forward.

There has never been a more inspiring response to the call of patriotism in the history of the world. Men who are on the point of achieving their highest ambitions are nevertheless ready to scrap their success at the call of duty, well knowing that it is a trivial thing to themselves and to their families compared to having their names upon their country's roll of honor. Their real success lies not in what they have done in the world but in their ability to recognize its true value. It is a glorious refutation of the cabal that we are a nation of materialists and money-grubbers. The man who counts his assets in dollars will discover that dollars no longer count. He will perceive the futility of his ambition to live in a forty-foot instead of a seventeen-foot house, and to have three automobiles instead of one. It will lead him to a consideration of what he will do with his life. He

## MY FRIENDS

will cease to measure his happiness by his bank-account. He will find out that he has a soul as well as a stomach; and even if this does not send him into the trenches it may result in his doing something for the service of mankind.

I found my partner sitting dejectedly at his desk, looking about as cheerful as an undertaker upon his introductory visit.

"What's the matter?" I demanded. "Miss Peterson told me that you had just sold a block of bonds. It didn't use to make you feel that way!"

He held up a slip of paper. It was a check for a hundred thousand dollars. I knew our profits would be about five thousand.

"What's the trouble with you?" I inquired, as I pulled out my pipe (I didn't know any easier way to save a dollar a day than to give up cigars) and leaned back in my chair.

He swung around and looked at me rather disgustedly.

"I don't want to make any more money!" he remarked.

"What!" I exclaimed. Such a statement was preposterous coming from Lord.

"I mean it," he said seriously. "It sickens me to be trying to sell securities at a time like this! It's like playing the fiddle with Rome burning. Everybody has been doing a lot of thinking lately, I guess.

## THE EARTHQUAKE

What I've been asking myself is, What are we doing for the country?"

"We furnish," I repeated reminiscently, "an important and necessary link between capital and investment, a market for the distribution of money. We enable the small investor to contribute easily and safely to the development of industry!"

Lord gave a hollow laugh.

"We are about as useful at the present juncture as dealers in Punch and Judy shows!"

"Don't you think," I asked with mock impressiveness, "that we *are* an important link——"

"We're the missing link between utter uselessness and the pretense of activity!" he cried bitterly. "No, no. Don't fool yourself! This bond-shop is only an excuse for you and me to come down-town and not to do something else."

"What else?" I asked curiously.

"Anything!" he almost shouted. "We bond and stock brokers are nothing but parasites just now. We're about on a par with theatre-ticket speculators. I'm getting tired of sitting here kicking my heels when there's so much big work to be done. It's all right for you—you've been away out of the darn thing; but stay here awhile! I'm all ready to fly the coop."

"Look here, old man!" I expostulated. "You mustn't talk that way. One would think you were on the point of giving up business and going into the trenches."



## MY FRIENDS

"I'm thinking of it," he replied.

"But you've got a wife and child!" I returned.

"Wife and child! Wife and child!" he ground out bitterly. "'*Ich habe weib und kind zu haus*'! My wife's got an independent income and you know it. My child is thirteen years old and is a beneficiary under her grandfather's trust estate to the extent of five thousand dollars per year. I'm thirty-nine years old and the champion golfer of my county! Of course I can sit here like a stuffed dove and look pained when any real man comes along, and get off the customary sad rot about how hard I've tried to 'do something' but nobody'll have me, and how Washington is overflowing with men of my class holding down clerical jobs. That's the most miserable sort of camouflage. There isn't a fitter man than I to go into the trenches to-day. I've waited until you got back—as Morris was away—but now I can face the thing squarely. At the present time I'm a slacker—that's all! A slacker—nothing else!"

He got up nervously and thrust his hand through his hair.

"I give you two weeks to feel just as I do. Of course I couldn't chuck the business with everybody away. I had to stick to the ship. So I worked the old 'wife and child' racket and snivelled around about how I'd give my eyes to go abroad—but couldn't! I would give my eyes to go—that's God's own truth! But that I *can't go* is a damn lie! I've fought this

## THE EARTHQUAKE

thing out with myself and it's clear as daylight. The world has got to be saved from those German brutes and it's everybody's job to go to it and clean 'em up—unless he is physically incapacitated. It's the old distinction between legal and moral obligation. If you see your neighbor's baby crawling on the railroad track in front of an express-train and you can save it merely by putting out your hand and yanking it out of the way, you have no legal obligation to do so. Well, I haven't any legal obligation to do my bit on the other side, either."

"Great Scott!" I replied. "I've got to have a chance to think. Why couldn't you have waited a day or two before springing all this on me?"

He turned and looked at me earnestly.

"It would be all the same," he protested. "Sooner or later—I'm going. I'm not going to see the railroad train run down the child without doing what I can to save it."

There was an expression almost of exaltation on his face. What curious things the war did to people! I looked out of the window with my brain awlirl. Flapping lazily on its pole hung our service-flag with its three stars. There was room enough for more. With a sudden impulse I turned and held out my hand to him:

"You're right, old man! To hell with the business!" I cried.

## IV

### MY WIFE AND OTHERS

Out of space—as infinite as the remotest star, as cold as the wind that blows between the worlds, and as black as the primordial darkness that covered the face of the waters at the creation of the earth—I heard the faint, persistent, muffled ringing of a bell. At first, in fact for some time, I lay there comfortably in that detached, impersonal, superior fashion so familiar to those who see other fellows' houses burning up or other fellows' wives running off with their best friends. Some poor devil had forgotten his latch-key, probably, or some unfortunate physician was needed sooner than had been expected!

I turned over and tried to go to sleep again, then a cold chill broke out upon my face, and I started up in bed, straining my ears for that ominous, distant—now quite personal—sound. It was my own telephone—three stories below! Jack! My God! Jack! Had Yaphank been blown up? Or had they shipped him off without my knowing it and the transport been torpedoed? Bzz-zz-zz!

## THE EARTHQUAKE

Trembling violently I switched on the night light and threw on my wrapper as quietly as I could, so as not to arouse Helen, who was sleeping in the next room. My little Jack! My only son! I stumbled out into the hall and down the stairs like a drunken man, fearful to answer that mandatory summons, but equally apprehensive lest it might cease before I could do so.

Bz-zz-zz-ZZ-ZZ! The change in the size of type illustrates the effect produced upon my sleep-drugged ears as I pushed open the pantry door.

"Hello!" I answered huskily. "Hello! What is it?"

"Is Mrs. Stanton there?" inquired a metallic female voice.

"This is *Mister* Stanton," I replied. "Give me the message."

"I must speak to Mrs. Stanton!" retorted the person at the other end of the wire.

"If it's any bad news—" I choked. "Please—tell—*me*!"

"Oh, it isn't any bad news! I'm sorry if I frightened you," said SHE, for that is the only typographical method of describing this authoritative lady. "But I want Mrs. Stanton at once. I need her at the Pennsylvania Station."

*Me*. "What the —! How do you mean? What are you talking about? She's sound asleep in bed!"

## MY WIFE AND OTHERS

*SHE.* "Naturally! This is Miss Pritchett talking, chairwoman of your wife's Committee of the Local Canteen. She's under orders, you know. We've fifteen hundred soldiers coming in from Spartanburg at four o'clock and it's now two fifty-five. I've got to get thirty women down there to feed those men in an hour, Mrs. Stanton among them. I shall see that the food is there."

*Me.* "But—! How on earth! You can't expect my wife to get up in the middle of the night and go down to the Pennsylvania Station! You're crazy!"

*SHE* (icily). "Will—you—kindly—transmit—the—order—to—your—wife?"

*Me.* "Look here, Miss Whateveryournameis! You must have got hold of the wrong Stanton—" I stopped abruptly, confronted by the peculiar opaqueness of sound that clothes a transmitter when the other party has hung up.

"Well!" I remarked to the alarm-clock on the shelf. "What do you think of *that*!"

Well, what *did* I think of it? I didn't know *what* I thought of it. Miss Whateverhernamewas seemed to know very definitely what she was talking about—but to arouse my wife at three A. M., even if she had been careless enough to allow her name to be used on a committee, and send her chasing off across the city was inconceivable!

I found a tin box of cigarettes, lit one, and sat down

## THE EARTHQUAKE

on the ice-box. The business just showed how foolish it was for anybody to get mixed up with things one didn't know anything about. Canteen! Imagine Helen—far more gentle and retiring than her namesake of Troy (Asia Minor)—trying to hustle coffee-cans and sandwich-trays for a lot of rookies who would probably yell at her as if she were a barmaid. It wasn't decent! It wasn't possible—absolutely not possible! Imagine some one calling my wife “Birdie”!

“No!” said I sternly to the alarm-clock. “If there isn't any mistake, there ought to be! That antique Amazon can get along without Helen. I'm going back to bed.”

Having reached this most sensible decision I opened the ice-chest, took a couple of bites out of an apple that I found there, drank half a glass of milk, and slowly climbed up the stairs again. Helen was looking over the banisters.

“What is it?” she queried sharply. “Anything about Jack?”

“Oh, no—it's nothing!” I replied, taking a final pull on my cigarette. “Nothing at all! Let's go to bed!”

She eyed me suspiciously.

“Who was it?” she demanded.

“Oh, some woman—I didn't get the name.”

“What did she want?”

## MY WIFE AND OTHERS

It was no use!

"She said that she wanted you to go and help feed a lot of soldiers over at the Pennsylvania——"

Helen—the elegant Helen!—had suddenly become galvanized!

"Miss Pritchett—it was Miss Pritchett!" she almost shouted. "My captain! Order me a taxi, will you?"

Already she had hurried back to her bedroom.

"Taxi? You don't mean you're going——"

"Of course I'm going!"

"There'll be plenty of women——"

"I'll be one of them."

"Helen," I expostulated. "You mustn't do this kind of thing. You're not fitted for it! You're not strong enough, to begin with. And you won't know how to handle that kind of people. The sort of woman that is needed to feed a lot of soldiers is a—a—*masculine* sort of woman—like *Miss Pritchett*!"

I was shouting through the door now.

A subdued laugh came from inside. "Be a good boy—order my taxi!"

"Hanged if I will!"

The door opened just a crack.

"John, you goose, don't you realize I've *got* to go? I'm pledged to. I'd be forever disgraced if I didn't. Besides, I *want* to! *Please* order me a taxi. If you don't, I'll be late. I'm almost dressed!"

## THE EARTHQUAKE

Almost dressed! Five minutes! Usually Helen took fifty!

"You're crazy!" I retorted. "Of course, if you insist, I'll order a taxi, but I'm not going to have you go over there alone at this time of night. It isn't decent. I'm going with you!"

"Then you'd better get started!" she laughed, "instead of standing there talking, in your pajamas. Come ahead! It will probably do you good. Besides, it will give you a chance to meet Miss Pritchett."

Fuming, and still more than half asleep, I telephoned for a taxi and hurriedly began to dress, but long before I was ready the motor was at the door and Helen was calling to me from the front hall to hurry up. As I came down-stairs I noticed that she had on a brown military cap with a small red emblem above the visor. I hate anything conspicuous or ostentatious, but it was so becoming to her that I held my peace. Besides, this sudden call—in the middle of the night—once one was fully aroused—had something rather romantic and thrilling about it. She intercepted and interpreted my glance, however.

"It's the regular canteen uniform," she explained. "It helps a lot in a crowd. People understand who you are and let you by."

Up in the blue alley between the housetops the stars snapped in the crisp, keen air. A pale-greenish efflorescence suffused the sky across the park and marked



## MY WIFE AND OTHERS

where glowed the as yet undimmed lights of Broadway. The city was still save now and then for the subdued clang of a surface-car and the rumble that, like a giant pulse, throbs in its arteries night and day. I felt the stimulus of the unusual, the excitement of being abroad before the dawn while the rest of the world slept. But Helen had stepped into the taxi and I clambered in after her as quickly as I could.

"Where to, sir?" asked the driver as he closed the door.

"To the Pennsylvania Station," replied Helen before I could answer. "And *please hurry!*"

As we passed the illuminated clock in front of the Hotel Netherlands the hands pointed to twenty minutes to four. Straight ahead for a mile or more the street-lamps drew away in a long parallel until they merged far below us in the glow of Forty-second Street. The smooth asphalt reflected the lights of our taxi as if wet with rain. No one was abroad. The sidewalks and roadway were bare of traffic. We had the city to ourselves. Was it possible that we were on our way to meet fifteen hundred young crusaders sworn to rescue Europe from the clutches of a military despotism? It was as difficult to believe as that millions of men had died or been wounded in that same cause. We knew it, yet we didn't know it! The men whom Helen was going to meet to-day might be floating dead in mid-ocean before the week was out.

## THE EARTHQUAKE

It occurred to me as we whirled down Fifth Avenue that the last time Helen and I had been out at such an hour together was when we had come home from the Highbills' dinner-dance in February, 1914. Not since that grand affair had we been invited to any elaborate function. The concussion of the conflict had demolished the strongholds of American society much as the German siege-guns at the beginning of the war had levelled the fortresses of Liège and Namur and the garrisons had been driven out to mingle with the rest of the population—many of them for the first time on equal terms.

I had always deplored the fact that Helen, along with most of the other American women of her type, in spite of her keen intelligence and bodily vigor had been content to remain in a state of ignorance and inactivity so far as current affairs were concerned. She had been quite satisfied with her friends, her family, her social life. She was a "perfect lady" and her circle was composed of "perfect ladies." She had not wanted to meet any others, for she had had nothing in common with them. They hadn't entered into her cosmos. Helen's world had consisted exclusively of rich women, upper servants, and high-class shopkeepers. She had had no social relations with the kind of women who went to market in the morning. She had had an instinctive feeling that it was mean to care what it cost to run the house or to ask the price of anything.

## MY WIFE AND OTHERS

She had never seen the butcher, the groceryman, or her own kitchen-maid—except the day she had engaged her. She had shrunk from any contact with people like street-car conductors, ticket-sellers, or taxicab-drivers. She had been so protected all her life that it had caused her acute suffering to talk to anybody whose point of view wasn't perfectly familiar to her beforehand. She had viewed women who "went in" for suffrage, temperance, or other movements as freakish or notoriety-seekers. She had held woman's place to be not so much in the home as in the drawing-room. In a word, even if not in the words of the hymn a "broken and useless vessel," she had been nevertheless a thing apart, whose value lay, if anywhere, in her very inutility—a "sensitive plant," moving in an atmosphere more rarefied than that of a noblewoman at the time of the French Revolution. Sometimes I have wondered if this war has not saved her from the guillotine. Anyhow, it has saved her from herself.

We had not been back in New York a month before I observed an extraordinary change in Helen's point of view. In the first place, as she had no motor she was obliged to make use of public conveyances, and, although at first she walked in preference to so doing, she soon so exhausted herself that she had no choice in the matter. How are the mighty fallen! Helen a strap-hanger! Her next discovery was that the

## THE EARTHQUAKE

butcher was really a very well-meaning human being who would much rather transact his business with her than with her cook. She now confesses that she looks forward to her morning excursion to Third Avenue as one of the most interesting features of her day. Moreover, as she has fewer servants she is compelled to see more of them and to pay more attention to the way they perform their duties. She has incidentally learned that they have feelings of their own and are not the hostile automata that she supposed. Indeed, she now finds that there are no less than nine brothers and cousins of our small family of domestics fighting with the Allies and that two have already been killed. You can't say "Home, James!" with quite the same inflection or with your nose quite so high in the air when James's only brother got a machine-gun bullet through his heart only last week at Poelcappelle. It makes a vast difference, too, when you find the girls in the kitchen ready and eager to roll bandages and knit sweaters. Up to this time the sisterhood of women has always seemed more theoretical than the brotherhood of man. The ordinary lady of fashion has always had her butler and chauffeur standing on guard between her and the world. And now those guards are gone—at least ours are.

A year ago I should have been inclined to believe that Helen couldn't have changed, that her attitude toward life would have been as immutable as the ex-

## MY WIFE AND OTHERS

pression upon the face of a graven image. Offhand one would have agreed with Mrs. Putnam when in her analysis of "The Lady" she says: "Sentimentally the lady has established herself as the criterion of a community's civilization. Very dear to her is the observance that hedges her about. In some subtle way it is so bound up with her self-respect and with her respect for the man who maintains it, that life would hardly be sweet to her without it. When it is flatly put to her that she cannot become a human being and yet retain her privileges as a non-combatant, she often enough decides for etiquette."

There is a student of women speaking about women, and yet her generalization has been proved an error only seven years after her book was written. The ladies of America haven't decided in "favor of etiquette"—with one accord they have chosen to become human beings.

While it is true, as Mrs. Putnam says, that "a lady may become a nun in the strictest and poorest order without altering her view of life, without the moral convulsion, the destruction of false ideas, the truth of character that would be the preliminary steps toward becoming an efficient stenographer," nevertheless that convulsion has occurred and all over the country women of every class are rallying to the call of "Service." The millionaire's wife is working side by side with the grocer's daughter, the music-teacher, and the

## THE EARTHQUAKE

seamstress, at the Red Cross building, the "rest huts," and "hostess houses" of the Y. M. and Y. W. C. A., the canning-kitchens, the canteens, in the Food Administration's house-to-house canvas, and in the thousand and one other activities which they can carry on so much better than men. The woman power of the United States is being mobilized with extraordinary rapidity. Already the women of New York have demonstrated their effectiveness in the State military census which was carried on by a volunteer body of five thousand women workers. There are in the United States probably ten million women who could take the places of men with the colors or engaged in war work. Another ten million are able to help. It would not take long, if it were necessary, for this great reserve army of twenty million women to become almost as efficient as the women of England are to-day. It should mean that the United States can send *as many men as will be needed* to insure the defeat of the Central Powers without a vital reduction in producing power, however large that number may be. But better than beating Germany is the democratizing effect which this common service is having upon the women who are sharing in it.

It is teaching the women of leisure that there is no play which is half as much fun as real work and that the people who are doing something are vastly more interesting than those who aren't. It is teaching the

## MY WIFE AND OTHERS

worker that the society woman has her good points, and that the main trouble with her is that, never having had any contact with the edges of life, she doesn't know how to act along with real folks. It is teaching all of them that when it comes to service the only thing that counts is delivering the goods, and it is bringing into the limelight a lot of extraordinarily able women of all classes.

The striking feature of this wholesale transmogrification is the ease and rapidity with which women, like Helen, have sloughed off the skin of their conventionality, shed all their pretenses and affectations, and plunged *in medias res* as if they had never done anything else all their lives. They remind me somehow of chickens who have felt the tingle of life and suddenly cracked through their shells—they are just as keen to get busy. Helen had no sooner put her house in order than she became passionately interested in everything that other women were doing. A year ago she would have retired from the world in shame rather than have a "Votes for Women" poster exhibited in our front window. It is there now, however, along with the sign manual of the Food Administration and a "Service" placard showing the American woman as a modern Joan of Arc against a background of the Stars and Stripes. I'm proud of all those cards and posters. I'm proud of what Helen is doing and of the spirit that makes her want to make public declaration



## THE EARTHQUAKE

of her principles. But it is so sudden! Yet everything is sudden these days. I suppose the earthquake has simply shaken the frosting off the façade, leaving exposed the solid stone and cement of American womanhood.

There's a new community spirit abroad. It's great sport, when it comes to putting up cherry jam, for Mrs. Angelo, whose husband runs the barber-shop at the summer resort on Long Island, to put it all over Mrs. Robinson, whose husband controls fifty-one per cent of the independent steel companies of America. But Mrs. Angelo has an unfair advantage—she learned how as a girl in Palermo. Her forty cans make poor Mrs. Robinson's thirteen look like thirty cents. Just so that Mrs. Robinson won't feel badly about it she gives her a friendly pat on the arm and an encouraging smile.

Then there is Aunt Silena Pratt who walks in to town from down the road three miles twice every week—a vigorous old lady whose taciturn disposition has given her rather a lonely time of it heretofore. You should see Aunt Silena and Mrs. Trust Company Thompson hit it off together. When Mrs. T. was Miss Althea Onderdonk up in Athens, New York, she had an Aunt Sally who was a “dead ringer” for Aunt Silena. It makes no difference to Althea now that Silena doesn't wear corsets and says “You was” and “She ain't.” If any grocer held out the sugar on them



## MY WIFE AND OTHERS

they would all—as a bunch—with hearts beating as one, march in a committee of the whole to the offending store and—well, you remember what happened to old Floyd Ireson at the hands of the women of Marblehead!

And the significant thing is that they are keeping it up. It was inspiring to see them go to it, but it is astounding to see them still at it. They have got their teeth in it and don't intend to let go until the struggle is over and won. The war is bringing out a lot of women whom the world had forgotten, even if they had not "the world forgot"—which a good many of them had. There is my cousin Minnie, for instance. Minnie is fifty-three years old and lives by herself in a boarding-house on Madison Avenue. She is a well-educated, intelligent, and capable woman, but she never married, and since she belongs to the generation that believed it wasn't the thing for women to have occupations, has never done anything except to take trips abroad with spinster friends and make herself generally useful to her relatives. If any one of the family is sick we are apt to ask Minnie up to help us; if Helen and I want to go out West we send for Minnie to come and stay with the children; if the house needs to be cleaned while we are away in the summer we get Minnie to keep an eye on it. We are always sending for Minnie, or, rather, we *were* always sending for her. Not a very enviable position for a woman—

## THE EARTHQUAKE

that of a family hanger-on—the poor relative always ready to use the opera tickets. Well, you should see Cousin Minnie *now*. She is the local commandant of some organization or other and has her own hangers-on—dozens of them. I think she runs something like a hundred diet-kitchens—and all the butchers and grocers tremble at her approach. She has no time to waste on her relatives, for she is one of Hoover's right-hand-maidens. She is an authority on cuts, calories, and cubic contents. She is living for the first time and making things hum. I shouldn't be surprised to see her at the head of an Allied Food Commission. Anyhow, I take off my hat to Minnie!

There are thousands of women just like her all over the United States. They are helping the country and helping themselves and each other, too. Starting with the making of surgical dressings in 1915 for the Allies, the work has gradually broadened until there is now hardly anything a woman can't do to help—even if she wants to become a letter-carrier or a yeoman in the United States navy.

It is all very well to say that it is "the fashion." Fashion might make it easier to start, but nothing less than patriotism would lead the women to keep on.

I thought of these things as I studied Helen's alert face under the flitting lights of the arc-lamps. It seemed to me that she looked ten years younger. It may have been her cap, but I thought she looked pret-

## MY WIFE AND OTHERS

tier than I had ever known her to be since we had been married. Speeding through the sleeping city I realized all over again that I was in love with my wife, and I had a curious sensation that I was eloping with her out of an old life into a new.

It was ten minutes to four as we rolled up to the curb at the Pennsylvania Station. No red-capped porters sprang forward to relieve us of our bags; no pompous officials watched our movements with courteous condescension. The brilliantly lighted concourse was empty save for a few bent heads partially visible through the windows of the ticket-offices.

"They must all be down on the platforms already!" exclaimed Helen, hurrying toward the gates. "I hope we're not late!"

The guardian at the head of the steps saluted as his eye caught Helen's cap.

"The train isn't in yet, miss," he remarked encouragingly. "The other ladies are below on the platform."

It began to look like business.

"Guess I'll come with you," I hazarded. "May I?"

"You'll have to ask Miss Pritchett," retorted my wife. "Maybe she'll let you—if she doesn't bite your head off first!"

We made our way down to the lower level and looked about us. At the farther end a group of per-

## THE EARTHQUAKE

haps thirty women, all in uniform, were standing about some crude plank tables piled high with rolls, sandwiches, and fruit, while on two trucks stood four huge canisters. The tracks were empty of trains, but there was an air of expectancy which indicated that we were none too soon.

"I must get assigned," said Helen, hurrying away.

I followed in more leisurely fashion. It was up to me, I recognized, to make some sort of explanation to the female autocrat running this show, and I had, unfortunately, to get her permission to remain there at all. It was not difficult to find her. There was only one woman there who by any possibility could have been Miss Pritchett. She—a tall, geometrical woman with strong-minded feet—was standing beside one of the canisters, and her aggressive profile, with its firmly compressed lips, left no doubt in my mind as to her identity.

But they were not all like that. Indeed, between Miss Pritchett and myself I descried a slender Artemis, whose cap was refusing to remain on her chestnut hair, and whose large gray eyes let themselves fall good-naturedly upon mine as she tried to force the rebellious thing into place. I was glad that I had heard that telephone. Surely we were all comrades—even if not yet in arms. And there were others, a few of whom I knew already. A stout woman with a slight mustache and an unmistakably Italian cast of feature, who

## MY WIFE AND OTHERS

seemed to be quite at home among the bananas, was arranging the fruit-stand. Assisting her was a scholastic angularity in specs, and beyond, dallying with the sandwiches, I perceived two of Margery's friends.

The platform was crowded with women of every sort, from awkward young girls to motherly white-haired old ladies, all with an unmistakable air of purpose. Evidently getting out at four in the morning had not proved such an undertaking to them as I had assumed that it would be for my wife. There were shop-girls, scrub-women, a couple of actresses, and others who had no peculiarly distinguishing characteristics, and among whom—could I be seeing true?—an elderly female who strikingly resembled my friend Mrs. Highbilt, in an old travelling suit. Shades of Fifth Avenue! She signalled with a gloveless hand.

"What are you doing here, you mere man?" she cackled genially.

"Taking lessons from my better half," I admitted. "Honestly, Anna, I think this is about the greatest thing I've seen since I got back!"

She seemed pleased.

"The women are all right!" she said confidently. "All of them!"

At that instant we were interrupted by the Italian lady, and I turned to render my apologies to my nemesis beside the coffee-cans.

## THE EARTHQUAKE

"I must ask your pardon," I began, approaching that forbidding personality in considerable embarrassment, "for the way I answered you over the telephone this morning——"

"Telephone?" she interrupted in a resonant *basso profundo*. "Telephone! I never spoke to you on the telephone in my life."

"Oh," I exclaimed. "Aren't you Miss Pritchett?"

"No," she replied stiffly. "I am not Miss Pritchett! I am Mrs. Judge Wadbone. My husband is one of our Supreme Court justices. *That* is Miss Pritchett—over *there*!" and she indicated my goddess of the erstwhile rebellious hair. "Thank you for the compliment—just the same!" she added rather humorously.

Any disastrous effect that this thrilling discovery might have had upon my future career was prevented by a heavy rumbling. The train was coming! Instantly the platform became a hive of activity as each woman rushed to her appointed position. The rumbling grew louder, the shriek of the brakes rising high above its diapason. Soon the train shot out of the shadows and ground slowly to a stop beside us. Simultaneously every window was pulled up, revealing one or more sober bronze faces.

"It's the ——th colored regulars!" a musical voice shouted in my ear. "Mr. Stanton, do you mind handling those coffee-urns?" It was SHE!

## MY WIFE AND OTHERS

"Anything! Anything *for you!*" I answered tremulously, as SHE shoved me coffeeward.

A couple of officers had descended from one of the platforms and were saluting our commanding officer. I had a fleeting vision of Helen—who had never employed a colored man or woman in our house—carefully pouring something from a steaming pitcher into a tin cup, which was thrust by a dark-skinned hand from a neighboring window.

"Would you prefer to have the men in company formation?" asked one of the officers.

"Thanks. Yes. It would be quicker," answered Miss Pritchett.

The major ascended the platform and gave some short, sharp orders. There was a loud scuffling, and in a moment the men came pouring out of the cars and formed company front, facing the train. They were a fine-looking lot of fellows, those black patriots! And they held themselves erect with a conscious pride in their uniforms that somehow took hold of me as nothing had for a long time. Strange how the uniform wipes out every difference of race or color! Their serious, intent faces made me think of those graven upon the monument to Robert Gould Shaw on Boston Common in memory of the man who was "buried with his niggers."

The company slowly filed down to the end of the platform, where each man filled his cup at the coffee-



## THE EARTHQUAKE

canister and received his sandwiches and fruit, then filed back again and into the cars. The sandwiches had all vanished—so had the bananas. One of the coffee-canisters had been overturned. They had made a clean sweep of everything in sight.

On the platform they had maintained a dignified silence, but once back in their seats they all began as a matter of course to sing. And how they sang! Their mellow voices floated out through the car windows and through the station until it echoed like some big dimly lighted cathedral to the antiphonies of a full choir—camp-meeting hymns like “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot,” alternating with such by-gone relics as “Camptown Races,” “I’se Gwine Back to Dixie,” and “Golden Slippers.” Then at a hint from the major a quartet of tall, handsome, deep-throated lads came out on the platform and gave us a programme of Hampton songs, while all of us, including the shop-girls and Mrs. Highbilt, gathered in a crowd about them. I’ve never heard such singing. Neither, I bet, have the boches. I believe those fellows will drive Fritz out of his trenches to the tune of some plantation melody.

In the midst of “Carry Me Back to Ole Virginny” a station-hand came running along the platform and said that the train was going to pull out, that they were eleven minutes behind time. From inside came the sound of a mouth-organ and a chorus of “Where



## MY WIFE AND OTHERS

do we go from here, boys? Where do we go from here?"

"All aboard! All aboard!" shouted the train-starter.

The young major saluted Miss Pritchett again.

"Thanks a lot!" he said. "The men hadn't had anything to eat since three o'clock yesterday afternoon."

"Thank you for the concert!" she answered. "They're a fine regiment! Good luck to you!"

The song inside changed to a thundering chorus of "Onward, Christian Soldiers." The train began to slide along the rails and the major stepped up on the lowest step of the platform, seemingly loath to go.

"It's awfully good of you, you know," he added feelingly, "to take such a lot of trouble."

"Not a bit!" she answered. "It's not much! I wish it were more!"

His eyes continued to linger upon her until an intervening pillar cut off his view. The whole episode had not taken more than twenty minutes. Oh, to be young! And to be going! I was meditating upon the misfortunes of being old when I was ordered to superintend the refilling of the coffee-urns. Mrs. Wadbone was brushing off the tables and Mrs. Highbitt was overseeing the efforts of two truckmen who were staggering from the other end of the platform with a basket of sandwiches.

## THE EARTHQUAKE

"You get the coffee up-stairs in the restaurant," ordered Miss Pritchett. "These men will take the cans up in the elevator to the main level."

An official now came down the iron steps from the gate.

"We have just had word that the next train with fifteen hundred conscripts from Yaphank has been delayed two hours. It will get in about quarter past six."

Miss Pritchett laughed and shrugged her shapely shoulders.

"You'll let us sleep in the waiting-room?" she asked.

"The station is yours!" he answered gallantly. "It's too bad!"

"Come on, everybody!" she called. "Let's go up to the restaurant and get some coffee ourselves."

Miss Pritchett and I pushed six of the small tables together, making one large one, and the party sat down indiscriminately. I made an excuse for my presence by being very active with the coffee and sandwiches, and while the kaffee klatsch was in full swing found an opportunity to make my apologies to Miss Pritchett for my lack of receptivity over the telephone.

"You see," I explained in mitigation of my offense, "Helen was the last person in the world I could imagine doing this sort of thing, so I took it for granted that you had got the wrong number."

## MY WIFE AND OTHERS

"You're not the first husband who has been surprised in that way recently," she retorted. "Husbands seem to be a little incredulous. Maybe that's why they elected me chairman—because I'm unencumbered."

"You ought to round up a couple of thousand husbands and let them see what you're doing here—it's great!" said I warmly. "It might start the husbands doing something."

Miss Pritchett nodded.

"It's a pity more people don't know the response that the women of the country have made," she said. "It's really very fine. I know that the men are giving their lives and their fortunes without a murmur, but numerically they aren't doing as much as the women. If you look around you the chances are that for every man you know here in New York who is really doing something for the war, you will find five times as many women doing just as much. The number of women of every class who have turned to and helped is quite marvellous—and it's growing bigger every day."

"Splendid!" I exclaimed, conscious that as yet I wasn't one of the men who had done anything. "What are they doing? What do you think is the most important thing they can do?"

"Well," she replied, "it seems to me that in the country and the smaller towns food conservation is obviously the best way in which women can help. They are right there next to the crops and know how

## THE EARTHQUAKE

to cook and preserve them. In the cities I should say that canteen work, like this, was the most important, and next to it social work in and around the camps. Of course, if there isn't any camp near by and the city is off the route of the troop-trains, the women had better do general Red Cross or Y. W. C. A. work, assist the Food Administration, or prepare themselves for clerical jobs. Most of the women here are helping in the food conservation campaign, are liable to be called for canteen duty any time, day or night, and are doing some other regular work besides. Mrs. Highbilt, for example, is indefatigable."

"Incredible!" I muttered.

"It's true, nevertheless," answered Miss Pritchett. "You can't tell who is going to be the most useful person either or where you are going to find the finest qualities. Would you believe that Anna Highbilt was the most effective canvasser we had in our district in getting signatures for food cards? Well, she was! And she took more abuse than any one of us!"

"Abuse?"

"Yes, abuse. Do you think it was all like taking candy from children? Not much! I was actually *put out* of five houses. In one instance the 'lady of the house'—her name was Krauskopf, by the way—when she heard what I was after, yelled over the banisters: 'Throw her out! Slam the door in her face!' Any number of them made themselves very

## MY WIFE AND OTHERS

disagreeable. One fat old German wished to know if I expected him to go without food so that his relatives could be killed more easily by Yankee soldiers. I told him it was a pity he wasn't back in Germany himself, he wouldn't be so fat and we wouldn't have to worry over how much he ate! You'd be surprised, too, at the number of women who sent down word that they 'weren't interested.' Perhaps they didn't actually send that word, but that was what came back to us. Maybe it was just a 'stall' on the part of the butler. On the whole, though, it was quite amusing the consideration we all got from the men servants."

"One doesn't expect much consideration from them," I agreed.

"I think there are probably two reasons for their change of heart," said Miss Pritchett. "In the first place the able-bodied ones that haven't gone to the front are rather ashamed of themselves, and want to show that their sympathies are with the Allies; and in the second place I think that the attitude of servants is changing, anyway. Good places aren't as easy to find as formerly. At least twenty per cent of my friends have given up housekeeping this winter. I suppose you read about the woman who discharged her entire force because they refused to sign the administration's pledge-cards when she asked them to?"

"Yes, I did," I answered. "If the war has less-

## THE EARTHQUAKE

ened the tyranny of the kitchen it has done something for us, anyhow."

"It's done more than that," she asserted. "Look over at that table. Do you think that those women over there knew of each other's existence before war was declared? They didn't. You're a friend of Mrs. Highbilt, I know. Well, so am I—now. Her entire world consisted simply of her own social circle, most of the members of which had incomes of over a hundred thousand dollars a year—a scattering of young men—'parlor snakes,' you know—drawing-room singers and artistic people generally who wanted her patronage, and the expensive men dressmakers, jewellers, and tradesmen with whom she dealt. She's told me so herself. She hadn't the remotest idea whether eggs ought to be twenty-five cents or a dollar and a quarter a dozen. As far as that goes, I'm not sure she does now. But she'll know soon enough, or I'll be very much mistaken. Anna Highbilt to-day is getting twice the fun out of life that she ever did before, because, although she's working twice as hard, she's doing something real. I don't suppose she ever got up at four o'clock in the morning before in her life. When you come to think of it, though, it isn't very much more of a strain on one's constitution to get up at four than it is to sit up until four, and she has done that often enough playing bridge."

Over at the improvised breakfast-table the canteen

## MY WIFE AND OTHERS

volunteers were chattering away very much as if they were at an afternoon tea.

"Anna Highbilt isn't the only one, either. You know most women really haven't had a chance. You can't blame them for being ineffective and having what men think is a narrow point of view when they've never had any contact with people. I don't know whether you're going to vote for woman suffrage on November 6——"

"I am!" I hastened to assure her.

"That's good," answered Miss Pritchett. "I hope you'll march in the parade, too. But let me give you an illustration of what getting out and mixing with other women has done for some of them. This is a true story. There's a very wealthy woman here in New York who, when the war broke out, made up her mind she wanted to do something for the country. She belonged to Anna Highbilt's class—of course I'm not referring to Anna. This woman asked to be put on a committee engaged in some active work, and she was made chairman of her local unit. I won't tell you what line of activity it was, because I don't want to identify her any more specifically, although what I am going to tell you is entirely to her credit. She threw into the job all the energy and executive ability that made her what they used to call a 'society leader.'"

Miss Pritchett laughed softly. Her laughter was contagious.

## THE EARTHQUAKE

"I note," I commented, "that you use the verb in the past tense."

"Yes," said Miss Pritchett. "I don't think we shall hear very much about 'society leaders' in the future. Well, as I was saying, this woman had an enormous amount of vitality. She was capable, rather aggressive, and I'm afraid had a rather exaggerated idea of her own importance. Under her were a committee of about a dozen men and women. They were not 'society leaders.' They were just plain people who were making a good many sacrifices to do the work in hand. Everything seemed to be going along pretty well until one day I received a telephone message asking if I would see the committee if they called. Naturally, I was rather surprised, but I fixed an hour, and that afternoon the entire committee, with the exception of the lady I speak of, came to my house. It appeared that they couldn't stand their chairman another minute. She meant well, they said, but she was overbearing, inconsiderate, inefficient, and well—either she must retire or they would resign in a body. I saw that they meant business. I asked them to give me twenty-four hours. Then I telephoned to this woman and made an appointment with her for the following morning."

"Not very pleasant for you," I ventured.

"Pleasant? I'd rather have gone 'over the top' and across No Man's Land and tried to cut my way



## MY WIFE AND OTHERS

through twenty feet of barbed wire," declared Miss Pritchett, "than tackle that particular woman in her own drawing-room. But I made up my mind that it was up to me. The butler showed me in and I sat on the corner of a Louis XVI bergère, feeling very much, I imagine, as Charlotte Corday must have on her way to the guillotine. Presently my lady swept in. She was arrayed in a new tailor-made gown cut *à la militaire*, and was evidently just on the point of going out on the work of her committee, for her motor was at the door and she had some papers in her hand. I suppose she thought I was there to congratulate her on making a good job of it, for she nearly fell all over me in her enthusiasm. However, I wasn't going to put her at a disadvantage by any false pretenses.

"Without giving her a chance to sit down, I said: 'Miss —, I have come here to say to you the most unpleasant things, probably, that one woman has ever had to say to another. There is nothing personal about it, and in a way that makes it all the worse. What I have to say is going to be said in cold blood.' She turned white and drew back. I could see the effect of my words was as if I had struck her in the face. She didn't understand, but she was horribly hurt.

"'It's going to be very hard,' I continued. 'Shall I tell you or not?'

## THE EARTHQUAKE

"She hesitated, then gripped the back of the chair in front of her and said: 'Go ahead.'

" 'Miss ——,' I went on in a perfectly matter-of-fact way, 'the men and women on your committee have come to me and said certain things. I don't know whether they are true or not. I leave that to you. It isn't a question of anything except getting the work done. They say that you are——' and then I went ahead and let her have it, using the exact language of the different members of her committee. It was pretty bad. I had never done anything like it before, and when I got through I found myself quite weak.

"Miss —— stood behind her chair, getting whiter and whiter. When I had concluded she swallowed once or twice, bit her lips, then straightened up and said: 'Miss Pritchett, it hasn't been pleasant for me to hear these things, but I want to thank you for coming, and I don't blame the committee a bit for complaining of me. I can see now that I was everything that they have said I was. I haven't any reason for asking to remain as chairman, but I have put my hand to this plough and I don't want to turn back. I believe I am capable of handling it right. I don't think that the fault lies so much in what I've done as in the way I've done it. Whether I stay or not I shall go to every man and woman on that committee and make a personal apology, and I hope that you and

## MY WIFE AND OTHERS

they will be willing to give me another chance. If you are, I promise you that there shall be no ground for any further complaint.'"

"By George!" I exclaimed. "A real person."

"Yes," agreed Miss Pritchett. "A very fine person—one of the very finest in this city. She did it, too, and to-day there isn't a committee doing any better work than hers."

"I suppose," I hazarded, "that your friend would have gone on feeling and acting as if she were the whole cheese and antagonizing everybody for the rest of her life if the war hadn't given her this chance to find out just where she stood."

"Exactly. And all her genuine administrative capacity and vitality would have been thrown away. Now it is being utilized in a good cause. She's a social leader in the real sense, instead of being a society leader."

"Long Island troop-train coming in in five minutes on track nineteen!" shouted the assistant station-master from the doorway.

The party at the table sprang to their feet and pushed back their chairs. While the women hurried toward the gate I helped fill the canisters with coffee and put them on the trucks. Then I joined my wife and Miss Pritchett on the lower platform. Already there was a little throng of people waiting for the train to come in; fathers and mothers, sisters and

## THE EARTHQUAKE

sweethearts, who had secured permission to say good-by to the men as they passed through. While we had been up-stairs in the restaurant waiting, additional supplies had been brought down to the lower level, so that now there were several tables of fruit and sandwiches, and an equal number of canisters of hot coffee. Every moment the platform became more crowded, and I perceived the advantage of having the canteen workers in uniform. One little old man particularly attracted my attention, he was so eager for the train to arrive. He could not have been more than sixty-five, but he was evidently suffering from rheumatism, for he walked with difficulty and his white hair made him look much older. I chatted with him for a moment and he told me that he had come to bid good-by to his only son whose name, like that of my own boy, was Jack. I should have learned more had not a distant whistle indicated the approach of the train, and the old man hobbled off as fast as he could without any particular idea of where he was going.

“Stand back! Stand back!”

Out of the shadows flashed a white light, and amid the thunder of steel against steel the heavy train emerged from the tunnel and slowly came to a stop beside the platform. Immediately the windows were thrown up and the heads of the boys appeared, looking eagerly out. The crowd surged toward them, each

## MY WIFE AND OTHERS

expecting to recognize instantly the person he or she was looking for. But at first all were grievously disappointed.

"What regiment are you?" called out a man's voice from the crowd.

"The Three Hundred and ——th," answered a curly-headed lad, hanging half-way out of the window. "What place is this—Jersey City or New York? Gee, smell the coffee!"

There was another rumbling, another shrieking of brakes, and on the other side of the same platform slid in another train likewise full of soldiers—fifteen hundred in all—so many that they could not be allowed to leave the cars. In a moment the canteen women were hurrying from window to window, filling cups and handing up sandwiches and fruit. There was no delay. The boys had their cups ready and the women filled them from pitchers drawn from the coffee-canisters. Usually there were about four arms protruding from each window at the same time and it took but a moment to empty the pitchers and the trays of food which the women lifted up. There were eight car-loads in each train, which allowed two women to each car, but as each one held a hundred half-famished rookies the work was not easy. Moreover, as fast as they had drained one tin cup of coffee and devoured a couple of sandwiches and a banana, they were ready for a second, and after that for a

## THE EARTHQUAKE

third round. I saw Helen hand one stalwart Irish lad five cups of coffee and thirteen sandwiches by actual count.

Meantime most of the relatives and friends had found the fellows they were looking for and were giving them all the latest news from home and listening to the gossip of the camp. Here and there a rookie, replete and happy, stuck his feet upon the opposite seat and burst into song regardless of his auditors. Others began to play cards and some endeavored to sleep. But most of those who had had no one come to bid them good-by began to ask the women to buy them post-cards at the news-stands and to take messages for their families to be delivered by telephone. I saw Anna Highbilt with a pad of paper in one hand and a pencil in the other standing beneath a crowded window, trying to jot down half a dozen messages at the same time.

“Tell my mother, please, ma’am—Orchard 3193—that’s the drug-store on the corner, but they’ll send over for her—you tell her I’m fine—oh, fine!—and——”

“Say, missus, while he’s tryin’ to think of something else, put down my girl for me, won’t you? Miss Sadie O’Connor—she’s a saleslady at Lord & Taylor’s—wait a minute, Jim!—you can get her between twelve and one at the noon hour. Tell her I’d sure have let her know about me coming through if they’d

## MY WIFE AND OTHERS

only told us long enough in advance. Tell her for me I'll bring her home something fine from Berlin. Tell her be sure to write——”

“I want you should tell my mother I am wearing her sweater,” breaks in the man from Orchard Street.

“Shut up, you big stiff! Wait till I get through!” protests the other.

Before the tactful Anna can decide which gentleman is entitled to priority a soft-eyed, olive-skinned Italian thrusts his head between them.

“You taka a message for me please, lady? My broth' she work in the Banca Romano—Numero Cinque Cento—Via Lafayette. You tella her I giva somet'ing to our mother for her bambino.”

“Whose bambino?” inquires Anna, confused.

“The bambino of my broth' who work in the bank. I giva two dollar to our mother for the bambino for Christmas!”

A heavenly smile softens his face.

“Grazie! Grazie! Lady!”

Doubtless had he been upon the platform he would have kissed her hands.

“I'll tell him!” Anna assures him, putting it all down. “Now, is there anybody else who wants to send a message?”

“Sure! Oi do!” bawls a voice from the depths of the car, followed by a huge beaming Irish face. “Mrs.

## THE EARTHQUAKE

Thomas Sullivan, 64 Agnes Street, Omaha. I want to send her one of thim post-cards wid the Woolworth Building on it."

"Your mother, I suppose?" asks Anna, unthinking.

"Me' mother nuthin'!" he retorts with a grin. "Sure she's me sweetheart! 'Tis a widdy she is!"

The taking of messages is a serious business. Once certain that there is anybody who will really undertake to deliver them and every rookie is keen to take advantage of the opportunity. The windows are crowded with faces each anxious for his turn to send some farewell word to the person dearest or nearest to him. Sometimes it is sentimental; more often jocular; frequently only informative or prosaic. But it may be the last message ever received from them and this invests it with a sacred character. While the women were hard at work noting down divers communications, I saw my little old man standing at the foot of the iron stairs with a look of abject misery upon his face. I was on the point of inquiring what was the matter when Miss Pritchett got ahead of me.

"My boy!" choked the little old man. "I can't find him here. They must have sent him somewhere else. And it's the only chance I'll have to see him before he sails for France! What can I do? I must bid him good-by. He's all I've got in the world! His mother died fifteen years ago and I've brought him up myself just as I knew she would have wanted.



## MY WIFE AND OTHERS

He's the best boy in the world. If I could only touch him once more, only for a minute—just to feel that he's there, it'd be all I want!"

The old fellow had quite lost control of himself, and I could see Miss Pritchett giving a surreptitious dab at her eyes with a small handkerchief.

"We'll see what we can do!" she said encouragingly. "There must be *some* way of finding him. What regiment does he belong to?"

"The ——th," sobbed the old man. "I can't have him go this way. It'd break his heart and mine, too. I jest want to put my arm around him once like I used to do when he was a little boy."

It was no use, I was already feeling for my own handkerchief. Why did they let little old men come around to bid lost boys good-by? Mrs. Judge Wadbone now joined the group and from her we learned that the ——th had been sent through to Jersey City. This finished the old fellow. He sat down on the lowest step and buried his head in his hands. Mrs. Supreme Court Wadbone screwed up her face and a large tear suddenly appeared upon the end of her Napoleonic nose. Obviously, it would be quite impossible for our old friend to secure at this late hour a permit to allow him to meet the train at Jersey City, even if he could get there in time to do so. The canteen committee—including the male member—gathered helplessly around him like a group of mourners

## THE EARTHQUAKE

at a funeral. Suddenly into our midst was wedged the capable figure of Anna Highbilt.

"What are all you ninnies crying about?" she demanded.

The little old man raised his head despairingly.

"If I could only just touch him once," he repeated. "He's all I've got——"

"You see," I explained hurriedly, for I didn't want to hear any more about that boy, "his son's regiment has been sent across to Jersey City instead of here as was originally intended. He's afraid he won't have a chance to see him before he sails."

"And he's the only son he's got," sniffed Mrs. Wadbone.

"Not see him? Of course he'll see him, if I have to charter a tug or a special train!" declared the indignant Mrs. Highbilt. "I know the commanding general—he's dined at my house half a dozen times—I'll telephone him at once. Come along, old man! You come right along with me! I promise you you'll see your boy, if we have to stop the transport or flag the train."

"Isn't she great!" ejaculated Miss Pritchett.

"Anna's all right!" I assented.

And the last we saw of our "social leader" she was half carrying the old man up the stairs in the direction of the taxicab stand. I heard afterward that she had managed somehow through her connections in Wash-

## MY WIFE AND OTHERS

ington to give the old fellow his longed-for opportunity to bid his son good-by.

It was after eight o'clock before the troop-trains pulled out. Already the sunlight was pouring through the huge studio-like windows of the station. Weary but exhilarated from the consciousness of the pleasure they had given and the good they had accomplished, the thirty women of the canteen climbed up the iron staircase, shook hands all round, and bade each other good-by.

"I want all you girls to dine with me next week—Friday," said Anna. "Is it a date?"

It was!

I had a queer feeling in my throat as I tucked Helen's arm under my elbow and led her toward the entrance. Human nature was a pretty fine thing, after all! We found Miss Pritchett on the sidewalk and offered her a lift. Near Forty-fifth Street she asked to be dropped at her store.

"Your *store*!" I exclaimed.

"Why, yes," she answered calmly. "Didn't you know that I was 'Lorette'?" Then she laughed and added: "I don't want to mix war work and business, but really I make awfully good hats!"

"I bet you do!" said I, wringing her hand.

## V

### MY DAUGHTER

"The person *I* am worrying about is *Margery!*" Helen confided to me rather anxiously about a week after our return to New York.

"What's the matter with her?" I demanded, not having observed anything peculiar about my daughter up to that moment.

"What are we going to *do* with her?" she asked.

"What *should* we do with her?" I retorted. "Can't she take care of herself? Seems to me there's plenty for all of us to do."

My wife uttered a half-amused but plaintive sigh.

"Don't you understand?" she inquired pathetically. "The poor child was 'coming out' this winter and now there isn't anything for her to come out into!" and she handed me a clipping from the "society notes" of the morning paper.

"Owing to the war," it read, "the regular débutante assemblies have been given up for the winter season of 1917-1918."

"Isn't it too bad?" she exclaimed. "Poor Margery! All her winter simply knocked topsyturvy! Think of all the plans we made for her. Why, I don't suppose now she will ever come out at all!"

## MY DAUGHTER

I handed the cutting back to her without comment.

"Well?" said my wife with a rising inflection.

"Don't you feel sorry?"

"No," I retorted, "I can't say that I do. I think the whole blooming business was just plain rot. Why should she want to 'come out'? Frankly, I'm glad that she can't."

My wife bit her lip. I suppose I was a little brusquer than the occasion demanded.

"Really, John!" she expostulated. "I think you are rather unfeeling about it!"

Now, I did not regard myself as unfeeling at all. I have always looked upon myself as a sympathetic and indulgent parent. Indeed, if I ever desired to secure another job as a father I feel confident that both my wife and daughter would give me a high recommendation for good manners, obedience, and docility. My evenings, Sundays, and check-book have always been at their disposal. I have chaperoned my children from their earliest years to church, the theatre, the circus, to ball-games, and the races. I have played Santa Claus at Christmas and furnished an unlimited supply of eggs and rabbits at Easter. I have ordered myself humbly and reverently to them as to my betters, and have never hurt them either by word or deed. But for all that I have never exercised any individual discretion in the bringing up of Margery.

I had always been devoted to her. She was un-

## THE EARTHQUAKE

deniably pretty, reasonably intelligent, loving and amenable, and an object of distinct interest to those of the opposite sex who were of her own age and whom fortune had thrown in her path.

She had been educated at the best schools that we could find in the city; had been taught sewing, riding, drawing, and the piano; had been exercised regularly at a gymnasium; had had her teeth straightened at an expense of several thousand dollars; had taken courses in modern music, "art movements" and "bird life" in Central Park; and could pour tea gracefully and talk fluently about the theatre, opera, and what other girls of her own age were doing.

But Margery, with all her amiability of character, could not make a cup of coffee, knew nothing whatever about housekeeping, and, although she had taken sewing-lessons, could not make over a hat or a last year's dress. I doubt if she had ever darned a stocking. Those sewing-lessons at two dollars per hour consisted in sitting around with five other young ladies and doing hemstitching twice every week for three months. She had never learned to use her hands and had never been called upon to do anything for herself.

It seems to me that the daughters of men of my own kind have been brought up hitherto with the idea that life was going to be a long joy-ride, during which one or more men would endeavor to keep them entertained and amused. It has never been suggested

## MY DAUGHTER

to them that they might be called upon to take care of the car.

Helen and I were not rich in the latter-day acceptance of the term, but we had brought up our daughter in such a way as to make her an admirable chatelaine for a millionaire and totally unfit to live upon a moderate income. She had been brought up on a scale (for two) of about twenty-five thousand dollars per annum—that is, it would have cost her husband, if they had had no children, about that sum to give her what she was used to and what we were giving her before the war hit us. It would have taken at least ten thousand dollars to maintain her—according to her lights—in only modest comfort.

Well, Margery is a dear girl and she is my daughter, but—I sometimes wondered if she was *worth it*! I devoutly hoped that some young gentleman of the right sort would think so and be willing to back up his opinion.

“I don’t care!” I replied stubbornly. “I’m not sorry. I’m glad. Do you think I could stand for Margery gadding around to dances after you’ve given up your motor and are working your hands off making bandages? It’s time she began to take life seriously!”

“That time will come soon enough,” replied my wife. “I don’t care a bit for what the war has done to *me*! It doesn’t hurt me much to give up things. But it’s different with a girl like Margery. She’s

## THE EARTHQUAKE

young and pretty and well, and she ought to be happy. Dear me, if she doesn't get a little gayety now, when will she *ever* get it? Besides, she won't *know* anybody. 'Coming out' is the way they meet the young men——"

"Young men!" I interrupted sarcastically. "There won't *be* any young men—worth meeting."

"Oh, yes there will!" she answered. "There will be plenty who haven't gone to the war yet, but who, of course, are going. And there are a lot who are too young to go."

"And too old!" I interjected.

Helen looked at me suspiciously. I had always been a cynic, but I had never realized how deeply the idea of bringing Margery out had sunk into my wife's soul.

From the time that Margery had first been put into short dresses my wife had made elaborate plans for the *dénouement* which was only due fifteen years later. I had no quarrel with bringing girls out in society. I suppose that essentially my quarrel was with society itself. A girl has got to leave the nursery some time. But I had always wanted to register a protest against the lavishness and expenditure that was made incidental to this perfectly natural transition from the schoolroom to the drawing-room. Wasn't it calculated to make any young girl, no matter how simple or sensible theretofore, put a false value on mere money? How could it be otherwise when practically



## MY DAUGHTER

every mother felt obliged to make her daughter's "coming-out" ball a grand affair, similar in every respect to the entertainments given by other mothers whose incomes knew no limit?

All this parade of luxury and wealth tended to frighten off the serious-minded young fellows who otherwise might have become interested. The very efforts of the mother to marry off her daughter tended to defeat her object, surrounding her, as she did, with a veneered wall of wealth and a barrier of false fashion. Indeed, most of the men at whose heads she threw her were not those from among whom she would want her to marry or who themselves had any idea of getting married. More often than not they were either jaded popinjays and "pet cats" who year by year got a social living by dancing with the *débutantes* and making themselves useful to the mothers, or featureless "dancing-men" who had nothing better to do than go to balls.

Only last year a friend of mine who wished to give an evening-party called up the best known restaurateur on Fifth Avenue, and asked whether he could secure a private dining-room for some night in January, February, or March. Although it was then early in October, he was told that every room in the establishment was already engaged for every night during the three months! The reason was that practically every mother of every daughter who was about to make her

## THE EARTHQUAKE

début into society had entered upon a campaign to give her child one of those "good times."

Of these introductions to society the majority might be ordinary enough affairs without any particular display, to which the girl invited all her friends of the dancing age, and where the guests enjoyed themselves in a simple and reasonable way. But in a minority of instances—yet in a sufficient number to tinge the débutante horizon with a faint yellow glow of cynicism—these dances had a sordid and mercenary aspect. In the larger American cities parents who didn't know the ropes or weren't quite sure of their place even availed themselves of press agencies and professional social steerers, who dictated to the girl the names of those whom she must ask (whether she knew them or not) if she expected to be received as one of the elect. The "coming-out" ball was not given in the home of the parents, ostensibly because the house would have been too small, but really because, as the whole affair was nothing but a fake, it was easier to induce the "right" young people to go to a restaurant. The snobbish young sycophant who might have shied at going to a house the owners of which he did not know could be more safely lured to a hired hall!

Here in one of half a dozen similar rooms, in which half a dozen similar entertainments were going on at the same time, the girl and her mother stood in a "gazabo" of potted palms, and received several hun-

## MY DAUGHTER

dred properly accredited persons. Many of these were their friends, but some, at least, were total strangers—young men carried on the lists as eligible because their families were in *The Social Radiator* and girls whom the débutante ought to have known even if she didn't. For six or seven hours this curiously impersonal mob danced, ate, and drank by virtue of the débutante's father's check-book, and she was whirled breathlessly about the room by sleek-haired, sap-headed young "desirables" who "cut in" on each other with shrewd calculation, while the utility man in the orchestra yelled, whistled, and uttered all the noises in the zoological gamut from the cry of a baby to the more appropriate bray of a donkey. At half after four or five the exhausted guests departed, insisting vociferously that they had had a "perfectly wonderful time." The bewildered victim of this barbaric sacrifice was hustled home, put instantly to bed, and the house maintained in absolute silence for eight or ten hours in order that she might recover sufficiently to go to another jamboree given in the same room in the same restaurant the following night; for, having given one of these delightful entertainments herself she became thereby privileged to attend all the others given by similar unfortunates.

"No, Helen," I repeated, "you can thank your stars that you and Margery have escaped from it all.

## THE EARTHQUAKE

You don't see the side of it that I do. You're too good and kind. But I'm glad it's all over for everybody."

"Do you really think it is all over?" she asked. "Dost think, John, that because thou art virtuous the young shall have no more cakes and ale?"

I laughed.

"Cakes and non-alcoholic beverages—yes," I answered. "But no more petit-fours and champagne-cup. Look here, Helen. Hasn't it ever occurred to you to ask yourself why the daughters of the rich should assume that they had a monopoly of amusement? Why should you sentimentalize about this particular class of girls when the youth of the whole nation has got to suffer? Don't you suppose it's going to hit 'em all about the same?"

"I hadn't really thought much about it," she admitted frankly. "I suppose you're right. But what *are* we going to do about Margery?"

Had we only known it we need not have concerned ourselves particularly about that young lady. After the first rush of getting the house started (during which my daughter made up in initiative and enthusiasm what she lacked in knowledge and technic) she had relapsed into the period of quasi-inactivity that had excited the solicitude of her mother. Then she unexpectedly announced one evening out of a clear sky that she wanted to go to work.

## MY DAUGHTER

"Go to work!" said her mother. "What sort of work?"

"Oh, almost anything. All the girls are doing something, you know. Clara Smith is learning telegraphy, and Dot George is studying to be a trained nurse; two of the others are driving ambulance supply wagons in France; a lot are going to canvass in the food campaign or are doing administrative work of one sort or another—everybody's busy, and I want to be!"

"Good!" I exclaimed. "How about going over to nurse?"

"It would *kill* her!" announced Helen. "She isn't nearly strong enough! What's even more important she's not *old* enough. I'm perfectly willing to have Margery do anything reasonable and necessary, but there's a lot of nonsense about this business of sending girls to France! Imagine letting Polly Pratt go over to Paris to drive an ambulance! I'd hate to be a *blessé* with *her* pounding me over the cobblestones! She never drove that ambulance, as a matter of fact. When she got there they wouldn't let her. She's been banging around Paris ever since."

"She had a fine going-away party at Sherry's, anyhow!" I said. "Don't you remember the full-page picture of her in her costume?"

"She's had a good many more parties over there at the Ritz, they tell me!" added Helen.

## THE EARTHQUAKE

"Don't worry!" smiled Margery. "I don't want to go to Paris or to drive an ambulance. I haven't any romantic ambitions and I'd be scared to death to cross the ocean. I just want to work—that's all—do something right here at home. It's partly because I feel I ought to and it's partly because I haven't anything else to do."

"Any ideas?" I inquired.

"We-ell," she answered, "I've always wished that I could do stenography and typewriting. There must be a lot of stenographers needed just now by the government, and to take the places of men who have either volunteered or been drafted. I think I could do it. Anyhow, I could try. There are plenty of good schools."

"Fine!" I said. "Great idea! Why don't you start right in to-morrow?"

"I'm going to," she announced calmly.

"Where?" we shouted in unison.

"Pocker's Business College on One Hundred and Seventy-first Street."

"Great heavens!" I cried aghast. "Why, that's a hundred blocks from here—five miles! How are you going to get there in the first place?"

"In the street-cars, of course."

"Margery!" cried Helen, "I can't have you cruising all over New York in public conveyances. It isn't the thing at all for a young girl—don't forget

## MY DAUGHTER

you haven't any maid. Some man might speak to you!"

"I've thought of that," answered my ewe lamb. "I shall ostentatiously carry a copy of *The New Republic* or *The Atlantic Monthly*; that ought to keep triflers at a distance."

"Let her go," said I. "Isn't that about as good a way for her to 'come out' as any?"

It is the youth of America who are going to win this war, if it is to be won; and no one knows it better than they. You can see it in their faces all about you. The silly little drone of yesterday is the busy worker of to-day. The change is so astonishing that it challenges credulity. How can it be possible that girls brought up in the lavish, idle, and selfish fashion of our time can almost overnight have been transformed into serious-minded young women intent upon carrying on their share of the nation's work? It is, nevertheless, true. Almost without exception Margery's friends are, as they express it, "doing something for the war." Well, the war is doing something for them, has done it already. It has brought out qualities too fine to be destroyed even by the mad parental effort to furnish them with amusement, give them that much-heralded "good time." It must be that underneath her superficiality, her pertness, her egotism, and her face-powder, there is in the American girl a spirit which not even the snobbery, the

## THE EARTHQUAKE

sham, and the artificial excitement of metropolitan social life can efface.

For Margery and her set there are practically no amusements now. There are no dances, no dinners, no "week-ends." Occasionally one or more of her boy friends get a day's leave and we go to the theatre, but the girls who come with us wear their last year's dresses, and the boys are all in uniform. There is, besides, a simplicity about their relations that is quite new to Helen and me. In fact as I have written some of the preceding paragraphs my conscience has pricked me a little, for more than one of the young fellows I have stigmatized as "sapheads" has turned out to be an efficient officer, and his manners have become wholly unrecognizable.

I suppose the dearth of males is rather hard on the girls. But it will be a good chance for them to find out before marriage who are the slackers, instead of waiting until afterward. Meantime they will be learning to cook, sew, keep house, and nurse—in preparation for the home-coming of the right kind of men—instead of wasting their time as they used to do at theatres, roof-gardens, and at dances with boys whom in their hearts they have usually despised. The war will drive away all the fakes and fortune-hunters, and will introduce our daughters into the best society for us—the society of the men who are going to save and then govern the country.



## VI

### MY SOLDIER SON

"We have shared the incommunicable experience of war; we have felt, we still feel, the passion of life to its top."

The Long Island train is slowly hitching its way over endless level fields of corn stubble and cabbages. You cannot see much of the stubble, for the rain has turned the rich earth into a brown ooze, which in the hollows has expanded into wide soup-like puddles, and the cabbages look like the green bathing-caps of a multitude of lady swimmers among the stalks. Outside the drops pelt viciously against the windows of the smoking-car, and dart down toward the sashes in quick streaks. Inside the air is thick with cigarette smoke, the fumes of which do not disguise a lurking odor of rubber and damp wool. We are taking four hours to do a schedule trip of two, and the boys in khaki, returning to camp after forty-eight hours' leave, though good-natured, are not complimentary.

In the seat in front of me a chubby red-faced youth is recounting some experience of the night before. I cannot hear all of it, but it seems to end in an encouraging manner:

## THE EARTHQUAKE

"Gee!" I says, sarcastic like. "Is that so? Well," I says, "you just better run along home, girly, where you belong. This ain't no place for kids!" I says.

"Oh, Gee!" echoes his companion sympathetically, shifting his gum, and then ruminatively: "Ain't they a pest!"

There is a card game going on across the way, and up at the end of the car a mouth-organ contests supremacy with three "barber chord" artists. There is a lot of slouching up and down the aisle and some cheerful scrapping, which at times causes me to make myself as small as possible. It is not uninteresting, but two hours are likely to be more than enough of it. I try to read the paper, but the smoke makes my eyes smart and I light my pipe in self-defense. I wonder why on earth I ever went to the unnecessary trouble of going down to visit Jack at his camp, instead of waiting for him to come to New York. Really, the smoke is impossible! I speculate as to the probability of getting an express back to the city at an early hour.

The train halts at a road crossing, decorated by a few reeling sign-boards, and conveniently adjacent to a saloon. I can hear the panting of the engine. Evidently they are taking on water—or beer—or something. Then the door opens behind me, and there is a perceptible stiffening of backs—as the men turn round.

## MY SOLDIER SON

"Hello, father!" cries Jack, clapping me on the shoulder. "I got 'permish' to come down the road and pick you up. How are you?"

The chubby youth has risen and now stands at salute.

"Take this seat, sir," says he. "Me and my pal can move up front. You can turn her back—this way."

"Thanks!" returns Captain John Stanton, Junior, taking possession of the seat, and swinging it over to face me, as if he had spent a lifetime as the recipient of attentions from a military orderly. I watch him in wonder. There is a self-possession, an ease of manner, an assurance about him that had been non-existent ten months before, and to which I am unable to accustom myself.

We had been too much excited at seeing him that first evening of our return home quite to grasp the transformation he had undergone; but, now that I could really look him over, he didn't seem to be the same Jack at all; there wasn't a trace of the original animal left. He had a new body and apparently he had gained a new soul. I suppose the mere uniform might have tended to create this effect, but with Jack the uniform was the merest incident. He had lost about twelve pounds, looked four inches taller, and in place of his habitual slouchiness had acquired an erect and almost graceful carriage.

## THE EARTHQUAKE

Moreover, instead of calling me Dad, Old Top, Governor, or Boss, he now addressed me as Father, with an occasional Sir. I confess that in his previous state of existence any such formality would have been out of place. Before, he had always gone round whistling, never answering a question seriously, and apparently never thinking about anything. This grave youth was an utter stranger to me, and, at first, I felt the awkwardness engendered by his strangeness.

The last time I had visited Jack in Cambridge, prior to our return to New York in the autumn of 1917, had been in the November of his sophomore year, the occasion being a note from the dean of Harvard College, informing me that the enthusiasm roused in my son by a certain victory upon the football-field had so stimulated his desire for mural decoration that he had suspended a necklace of seven or eight glistening white water-pitchers from the cupola of Harvard Hall.

He had previously floundered along in the lower third of his form at Groton, occasionally, under the impetus of parental admonition, indulging in a rocket-like ascent to second or third place, from which inevitably, at the end of a month or two, he descended like the proverbial stick. At home his chief occupations had been coloring a large meerschaum pipe and singing Hawaiian love-songs through his nose to the accompaniment of the ukulele.

Once he had passed his college exams, any thought

## MY SOLDIER SON

of intellectual labor seemed to have departed from him; and, to my astonishment, I began to hear him spoken of as quite an extraordinary eccentric dancer. His chief form of amusement seemed to be going to the theatre in Boston with a couple of his chums and then motoring by night to New York, arriving at our house about breakfast-time, and returning the next evening in the same manner. During the spring term of his freshman year, while running for the Dicky, he had appeared at a symphony rehearsal in Boston covered with shoestrings, which he had attempted to sell between the musical numbers—until ejected. His general tendency to make a fool of himself had gradually diminished, to be sure; but the recollection of it had remained. I had regarded him with affection, tempered by distrust, and had always suspected him of laziness and frivolity. That was the Jack I had left in December, 1916. It was the portrait of him that I still carried in my mind when I returned to New York the following October.

But I soon saw that something had occurred undreamed of as possible in my philosophy. When I had first learned that Jack had donned the uniform of his country I had been guilty of making some unfeeling jest about an "ass in a lion's skin." Now, to my wonderment and pride, I found that the ass had grown to fit it. If not yet an adult lion—ass, at any rate, he was no longer. But to us he was a full-grown

## THE EARTHQUAKE

lion already. We regarded him with respect and hung upon his words, thrilled with a sad happiness.

He himself knew that he had changed, was under no delusions as to what the future might have in store for him, and his constant effort was to convince us that his going into the army was the greatest thing that had ever happened to him. There was, even to our anxious minds, not the slightest doubt about that. The boy had actually become a man.

He offered me a cigarette, lit one for himself, and—asked me whether I minded his putting his feet upon the seat beside me!

“Too bad it’s such a rotten day!” he remarked, glancing through the window. “Anyhow, you can see our quarters and get some idea of what it’s all like. Awfully good of you to bother to come.”

“Do you suppose anything could keep me away?” I demanded gruffly. “This war is the most momentous event in the history of the world. I want to see all I can of it—even if only vicariously. But I shall never be able to catch up with you, Jack.”

“Well,” he conceded, “I’ll have to admit I’ve learned a lot about all sorts of things—particularly my fellow citizens of the United States of America. Out of the two hundred and eighty men in my company, thirty of them—literally—couldn’t speak a word of English!”

“Couldn’t speak English!” I exclaimed, astounded.

## MY SOLDIER SON

"Do you mean to say there are men in our army who can't speak English?"

"Sure!" he retorted. "My thirty were birds! We had to begin at the very beginning—put 'em in line, point at their right foot, and say: 'Foot! Right foot! That—is—your—right—foot!' Gradually we got 'em so they could face to the right and left, and most of them now can ask for meat and beans. Why, there is one fellow down here who not only couldn't speak any English, but he couldn't tell us who he was. Nobody knows now where he came from, how he got here, where he was born, or anything about him. We tried every kind of interpreter on him in the camp, and they all gave him up in despair. He just made queer noises with his mouth. Finally I got a piece of paper and wrote the word Smith on it and pinned it on his cuff. 'You're Smith!' I said. And Smith he is!

"There's a place called Tiflis, over in the Caucasus, where they say you can hear one hundred and sixty-seven languages spoken. I tell you it's got nothing on us. The first seventeen men on my muster-roll, for instance, represent twelve different nationalities; and the first one, Abend, is a German, with two brothers in the boche army fighting on the western front. Then there's Aristopoulous, a Greek; and little Baracca, an Italian; Badapol—I don't know what he is—some kind of Slav, I guess; Castaigne, he's French extraction; Callahan, Irish; Conant, Welsh;

## THE EARTHQUAKE

Korbel, Bohemian; Dikirian, he's a Syrian rug-seller—I forget just how they come; but further along there's Zriek, an Arab; Potopoff, a Russian; Pacheco, who comes from Sonora, Mexico; a whole bunch of Lithuanians and a lot from little Russian places you never heard of at all.

“They're not half so green, though, as some of the chaps right from the U. S. A. I've got two New York men from the Adirondacks who never were on a railroad-train until they were drafted, and one from way up near the Canadian border who never had seen an electric light or a moving picture! But they're bully stuff, most of them. Army life brings out what's best in each one and sort of distributes it around among the others. I've learned a lot from some of them.”

“How about those fellows that have been forced into the service?” I asked. “After all, it isn't as if they were volunteers.”

“No,” he admitted, “not exactly—yet. But it's gradually getting to be so, and by the time we sail I don't believe there'll be ten per cent of the men who won't have what I call ‘the volunteer spirit.’ Of course, at the beginning there's a difference between the attitude of the volunteer and the selected man. But the extraordinary part about the life down here is that, after they have been here a few days and seen how things are done, most of the men get an entirely



## MY SOLDIER SON

new point of view and are proud and glad to be here. It may be due in part to the feeling that, having been drafted, they might as well make the best of it, and that the only way to save their own lives—which is what I tell 'em every day—is to make themselves as efficient as possible so that when they come out of the trenches they can put the boches on the run. Or it may be something else." He hesitated. "I don't know.

"There's a kind of feeling about the whole thing that I can't explain! Anyhow, it gets hold of 'em! Now, I am telling you the honest truth when I say that, in spite of the fact that seventy-five per cent of my own men claimed exemption in the first place, seventy-five per cent of all of them to-day have absolutely the volunteer spirit. The other twenty-five are still grumbling—frankly. They say they didn't want to fight; that they're being made to fight against their will; and that the decision of the exemption boards in their respective cases was unfair and unjust. But they're getting over it. They're getting to see that, when you come right down to it, the only really democratic army is a selected army."

"How about socialism?" I inquired timidly.

"I don't hear much about it," he said, "except the backhanded kind you get in some newspapers. There isn't any pamphleteering as yet. I think there's something about how our men are treated and their rela-

## THE EARTHQUAKE

tion to their officers which makes against that kind of thing. It's so different from the way things used to be in the regular army and the way, as I understand it, things are on the other side."

"How do you mean?" I asked. "How, different?"

"Why," he replied, "we do everything we can to encourage intercourse between the men and the officers. Every man in the company is free to come to me at any time to ask questions, and to have the reasons for doing a particular thing in a particular way explained to him. That, I understand, was something unheard of in the regular army."

"‘Theirs not to reason why,  
Theirs but to do and die,’"

I murmured.

"That was the old idea," responded Jack. "Now, I bet you that my men will do and die just as readily if, before they reach the point of doing and dying, they feel that their government wants them to know and understand the reason. The noncoms sent down here from the regular army don't understand it at all; but I think it is going to make a big difference, and it certainly makes for the right sort of democracy."

"Do you find them quick to learn? How about their intelligence?"

"It's really wonderful!" he exclaimed with enthusiasm. "In the first place it's astonishing what a high

## MY SOLDIER SON

grade of men we have got in the draft. There are about a dozen college men in my company alone, and there are any number of fellows who have held rather responsible business positions. We have two noncommissioned instructors from the regular army, and the way the fellows pick it all up is perfectly astonishing.

"There's another thing, too, you'd be interested in, and that's the general tone of the whole place. Perhaps you don't know it, but there used to be a kind of convention among the enlisted men at an army post which required them to curse every other word. Nobody ever spoke of a rifle as a plain rifle—it was a — — rifle. It was the same way about everything. Now this new army of ours is really a *new* army. It hasn't got any traditions of swearing or carousing. Uncle Sam has started in perfectly fresh, without the handicap in morals that a huge regular army would have involved. The men haven't been used to profane and smutty talk, and they don't want it. Those that do, get it kicked out of them pretty quick. The Y. M. C. A. centres are simply great! Do you know that we've got a Y. M. C. A. house for every regiment? No Sunday-school talk, either! Anybody can go there—Jews, Roman Catholics, Hindus, atheists! A fellow doesn't have a Bible shoved into one hand and a hymn-book into the other if he wants to write a letter home.

"I have a vaudeville show every ten days that,

## THE EARTHQUAKE

honestly, beats anything you can get on Broadway. Right in my own company I've got two professional actors, a professional dancer, an acrobat, and juggler, three men that were leaders in college theatricals, and so much amateur musical talent that I don't know what to do with it. I'm not joking; you couldn't get for a dollar in New York City what our men get at that vaudeville show every ten days—and the bill is new every time."

"How about your equipment?"

Jack shrugged his shoulders.

"Rotten! I suppose it will come—some time. At present in my company we've got sixty Kraggs and that's all; but, of course, we're not going to use Kraggs on the other side. However, I guess the government will look out for us! But having the wrong kind of rifles is bad business, because the balance is different, and it is bound to handicap us more or less.

"However, equipment or no equipment, I tell you the men are getting into fine shape. Physically they're a ripping lot of fellows. They can go out with a pick and shovel, and work four hours in the morning and four hours again in the afternoon, and not turn a hair!

"I've seen some remarkable changes in physique too. You know, there are a lot of fellows down here who are a great deal better off than they ever were before in their lives. For example, there are about fifteen men in my company who worked in sweat-

## MY SOLDIER SON

shops on the East Side. I don't suppose they got more than eleven or twelve dollars a week at the outside. You wonder how they ever got by inspection. That's another question. You know they send us a lot of cripples—real cripples, I mean!

“Well, to get back to my sweat-shop men. When they came here they were as pasty-faced, narrow-chested, and clammy-handed a bunch as you ever saw. They had all claimed exemption, were scared to death, and thought they were just going to be trotted out and shot. When they recovered from fright they bellowed like steers about tyranny and injustice! What's happened? They have been given regular exercise and all they can eat three times a day, including red meat, and they're fit as prize-fighters and as happy as clams.

“To-day you wouldn't know 'em! Their chests have expanded about five inches; their complexions have cleared up; they've been in English school right along, so that by this time they can talk pretty intelligibly, and they can go to the Y. M. C. A. and read, or watch a good vaudeville show for nothing, instead of paying their money to go to a cheap movie or sitting around talking socialism.

“I tell you when those fellows come out of the army they will have a respect for the United States Government they'd never get in any other way. When Ikey and Abie go back to the East Side, if any greasy an-

## THE EARTHQUAKE

archist attempts to put anything over on them, Ikey and Abie will stand him up against the wall and say: 'See here, old sport! Have you ever had any dealings with the United States Government? Well, *we have!* Uncle Sam's all right! Get out!' . . . Hello! We're there!"

The train had come to a stop. Outside I could see a half-open shed with an appurtenant tobacco-stand, apparently floating upon a sea of yellow mud.

"This is the lower station," announced Jack as the men swarmed off the car. "I'm afraid you'll have to walk over to the camp. It's not much over half a mile. Glad you've got your galoshes."

Look as far as I could in every direction, there was nothing but a welter of ooze. Ahead of us wallowed our train companions, the more distant indistinguishable through the rain from the medium in which they wallowed. We wallowed after them. It was highly uncomfortable.

"This isn't war," I panted. "'It's murder!'"

Jack held the umbrella nearer.

"I guess it's the nearest thing to real war this side of the trenches," he answered grimly. "We're well used to mud! There can't be anything worse—even in Flanders."

Presently we passed the stable sheds of the new remount station, planned to hold thirty thousand horses, and round which we could see the guards rid-

## MY SOLDIER SON

ing like cowboys; then a wilderness of low wooden barracks appeared out of the rain, and we found ourselves unexpectedly walking on firm macadam down a street that looked something like an apotheosized mining-camp and which was marked "Third Avenue."

Everywhere fellows in uniform were coming and going. Fours of newly arrived conscripts tramped past under the fearsome direction of a regular non-com, and at one point I saw the *bleu ciel* and red cap of a French officer, who was instructing a bombing squad in an open field, the motions of the men producing a strange effect, as if they were playing a combination of cricket, handball, and tenpins, with a dash of jumping-jack.

We walked along for an interminable distance in the rain, past myriads of barracks, all exactly alike, until we stopped finally before one with which Jack evidently claimed relationship.

"It's messtime," he said. "We're a bit late as it is. I guess we'd better go right in at once."

Jack conducted me into what somewhat resembled the lunch-room of a Western railroad junction, save that it was cleaner. All the tables were empty but one. Evidently the men had just finished dinner. Two fellows about Jack's age were sitting near a counter, from behind which the food was lifted from the range smoking hot, by a cook in a white coat. I was introduced to my son's junior messmates—both



## THE EARTHQUAKE

second lieutenants—and found that, in spite of my experiences in the smoking-car, I had an excellent appetite for the plentiful and well-cooked meal that was placed before me.

Our two table companions soon excused themselves, and when we had taken our last cup of coffee and had had a second helping of pie, Jack led me across the way to officers' barracks and into his own ten-by-twelve bedroom. Above us the rain drummed steadily on the roof. The room was rather close and smelled strongly of pine boards. To me it was dull, dreary, and monotonous; yet I could see that for him it was all invested with a glamour like that of the Round Table of King Arthur. Rain and mud, mud and rain; yet beyond that ocean of mud and through that curtain of rain there gleamed for him a vision of eternal glory.

"Do you have any time to yourself, Jack? Aren't you all tired out?" I queried, though he looked hard as nails.

"I don't have time to think at all," he answered. "If I take reveille I get up at five-forty, and if I don't take it I get up at quarter to six. Anyhow, I always eat breakfast at six-fifteen. From that time on I haven't a minute until I hit my bunk, between eleven and twelve at night. The amount of detail work is something fierce! I spend nearly a third of my time at my desk, writing out reports, making up lists, and doing clerical work of one sort or another.



## MY SOLDIER SON

"Lord, how I sleep! I guess it's a good thing. Otherwise I might worry. You see, sometimes a chap realizes that he is pretty young to have the responsibility of two hundred and eighty men of his own age, who are just as valuable to their families and to their country as he is. Most of those fellows have more sense than I have, and just as much education. The only difference is that I happened to go to Plattsburg. I don't know why I did, at that. I went just because my friends were going. I didn't have anything else to do particularly. It was a kind of adventure. 'Soldiers Three' stuff, you know—that sort of thing.

"I tell you I woke up with a bump when some of the instructors got talking to us up there. The first time you do bayonet exercise it's enough to make you sick! You realize what it all means then. I feel pretty sure that the man who committed suicide there did so because the horror of the whole thing was too much for him. It's hard to teach the men 'the will to use the bayonet'; that they're sent forward to kill or be killed. There is no back step or fencing taught, and the only parry is the slight deflection of your opponent's point immediately before your own thrust."

"Do the men appreciate what they are up against?"

Jack shook his head.

"I don't think they do," he answered solemnly. "That's the worst feature of it. After the dreariness of the first few days wears off they get to be like a

## THE EARTHQUAKE

parcel of kids. They act like a lot of schoolboys. The difficulty is to make 'em see the necessity of discipline. I have to talk to them like a Dutch uncle.

"For example, there's a fellow named Coffey in my company. Yesterday afternoon he went up and bought a package of cigarettes when he knew perfectly well he wouldn't have time to get back for inspection—didn't think it made any difference, you know! What are you going to do with a fellow like that? The question is, how are you going to show him that it does make a difference?

"‘Look here, Coffey,’ I said. ‘I don't know what's the matter with you. I don't want to punish you. What I want is to make you see that some time or other, unless you realize that absolute obedience to orders is a matter of life and death, you are going to put yourself and all of us in a hole. When we get over in a trench, sixty yards opposite the Germans, and the order is given for us to go over and clean 'em out, you've got to be there—not off buying a package of fags. Nobody is going to wait for you then. Now, as I said, I don't want to punish you, but I don't know of any other way to bring it home to you that the safety of all of us depends on your strict obedience to orders. You go down and saw wood for three hours!’ ”

"How many of your own friends volunteered?" I asked.

## MY SOLDIER SON

"All of them," he answered instantly. "Every one of the fellows I know either went to Plattsburg and got a commission or have volunteered. They just did it as a matter of course—without thinking anything about it especially. I don't know any college men of the right age who haven't, except one or two cripples. Out of the New York Harvard Club's full membership of forty-eight hundred, old and young, there are nearly a thousand men in active service in the army and navy and several hundred more engaged in some sort of war service—almost a perfect record for the men of military age.

"It's just the same with all the other colleges and college clubs, all the fellows have come up to the scratch. It's what you'd expect, of course. The only ones who make me sore—when we're so much in need of officers—are the few chaps just over age who are perfectly well and fit—athletes, some of 'em—who've got jobs of one sort or another down in Washington, when they could be going across. I wouldn't mind if they didn't pretend to be doing something. What I kick at is the able-bodied fellow of thirty-five who's got a clerical job in the War Department and is camouflaging behind a desk in a uniform, instead of drilling a machine-gun squad or teaching his men how to cut through barbed wire.

"Then there's the husky young athlete who goes into the remount business and is busily engaged in buying

## THE EARTHQUAKE

horses out in Kansas, where he is fairly safe from the U-boats, and the perfectly able-bodied Y. M. C. A. worker who is drawing a salary to teach the soldiers how to play football. That last is wonderful work, but they should utilize much older men or fellows who have some physical defect, instead of chaps who ought to be in the ranks."

"The slackers will be the losers, Jack," I assured him.

"But they may never know it," he answered. "They certainly won't realize what they've missed. They couldn't!" He turned to me eagerly. "Father! Life's an entirely different thing to me since I came down here. What I've learned in the last six weeks has changed every idea I've ever had. The friendships I've made would be enough to pay for everything. You know, up at college we had a pretty low standard. It was all right enough in its way, but there was a lot of petty meanness and imputing rotten motives. Well, here we're all brothers, and we know that we can count on each other and on the men—every last one of them. I didn't used to have a very high opinion of human nature, but now with these friends I've made and my new knowledge of the men I used to regard as muckers I realize how fine it is—and that it's well worth dying for!"

As we ploughed back through the mud to the lower station I still couldn't bring myself to realize that

## MY SOLDIER SON

this serious-minded young officer was my son. It seemed preposterous! It was wholly incredible that this was the silly ass who had strung crockery on a belfry. Here was a fully equipped officer, keenly alive to all his obligations and responsibilities, produced in a little over three months of intensive training. In the face of such a miracle, why had I ever bothered about college?

And then it came to me that perhaps the college education had unconsciously had something to do with it. I thought of the Teddy-bear at home and of Helen, still almost fresh as a girl! Was it possible that I had a son old enough to go to war? Was I as old as all that? Yes; a thousand years old! As old as Methuselah, to every intent and useful purpose, for I could no longer bear arms in defense of what I held most dear and sacred. The sword had passed to my son and he was now the head of the family. By every tradition and every law he now came first.

I wonder if there is some peculiar adaptability in the newer blood of our hybrid race that makes it possible in three months to produce a thousand youths capable of training an army. Was Bryan merely talking when he prophesied a million men springing to arms overnight? Probably there is an inherited gift for leadership in the Anglo-Saxon that has made it easier for us. Jack told us a story illustrating that gift

## THE EARTHQUAKE

about a young English officer in Flanders who, to the great disgust of his men, always wore a monocle. This elegant stripling would come out of his dugout of a morning for inspection, yawn, stretch, insert his eye-glass, and, after glancing over the battalion, remark casually: "You may carry on, sergeant—carry on!"

One morning he made his appearance as usual to find that each man had cut the identification tag off his wrist and was wearing it in his right eye—a battalion of monocled soldiers! The young captain put on his own eye-glass, stared at them for a moment, then dropped the monocle into the palm of his hand, spun it in the air with his thumb, made a free catch of it in his eye, straightened up, looked at them sternly and said: "Now, you bloomin' blighters, can you do that?"

It is a fortunate thing for the world that this war is to be fought out by the young. They are going into it courageously and gladly; gayly like the two boys who fell leading the charge at Fontenoy, and of whom the old French chronicler wrote: "They were very noble—they cared nothing for their lives!" For them war is a thing of romance and of glory, for them the sword still sings:

"The War-Thing, the Comrade,  
Father of honor  
And giver of kingship,

## MY SOLDIER SON

The fame-smith, the song master,  
Clear singing, clean slicing,  
Sweet spoken, soft finishing,  
Making death beautiful,  
Life but a coin  
To be staked in the pastime  
Whose playing is more  
Than the transfer of being;  
Arch-anarch, chief builder,  
Prince and evangelist,  
I am the Will of God:  
I am the Sword."

The change the war has wrought in Jack it has wrought in hundreds of thousands of other hitherto careless boys. No one can look at the fellows in uniform, however young, without realizing that they have something of the nobility and gravity that always comes to those who hold their lives secondary to the cause they serve.

It is true that most of them carry it lightly. "What's the use of worrying?" But all the same they know what they are up against and they are not going into it as an adventure. Their example has stiffened the backbone of all the rest of us. The man who is not in uniform is anxious to show that it is not his fault he isn't. It has made men ashamed to be any less decent than the chaps who are going to fight for them. Wearing the uniform has also done a good deal to reduce the amount of drinking among the younger men at an age when taking a drink is still

## THE EARTHQUAKE

regarded as a sign of emancipation. On the other hand, we may become a race of chronic cigarette fiends. But no one can question that the health of the nation must improve as a result of the training our boys are receiving and the effect of their example upon the civilian population. That and the reduction in individual food consumption may give us a concave national waist-line. Even the sight of Walter Camp's adipose office-holders going through their matutinal exercises in Washington was not without its inspiration. Unconsciously a lot of us are already in training; and before long most of us will be so consciously.

In the East, at any rate, practically all the boys who have prepared for or gone to college and are of the proper military age have enlisted or received officers' commissions. They are not taking the chance of being relegated after the war to the class that didn't go. For their generation it is probably true that hereafter there will be in effect only two sorts—those who went and those who didn't. No boy of twenty in this part of the world is willing to invite the suspicion of being a coward or even to have said to him as Henry IV wrote to Crillon: "Go hang yourself, brave Crillon; you were not with me at Arques!"

Some of Jack's friends whose eyes are bad or who have some other physical limitation have tried and been rejected over and over again—one as many as eleven times. If nothing else was open to them they



## MY SOLDIER SON

have secured work in the Y. M. C. A., Red Cross, or War Relief on the other side. Already the boy of military age is conspicuous by his absence in New York City—unless he is in uniform. The girls are sending them. “No slackers need apply!” is their motto. They won’t dance with anybody not in uniform. Why should they?

My own feeling is that the best thing that could happen to this country after its half-century of financial drunkenness would be compulsory military training. It is not so bad now for fellows like Jack, whose parents can send them out of the city to country boarding-schools and afterward to college, where they will get plenty of athletics; but think what army life would mean for the city boys who otherwise would be working indoors in banks and factories! Think, too, what it would do for Jack and his like in the way of discipline and making men of them! Then we should not need a full year to put an army of two hundred and fifty thousand men in the field, and we might have enough rifles to go round.

I sometimes wonder what the ultimate effect of the fierce life of the trenches, particularly if the war continues for several years, will be upon the youth of this country. Dr. Alexis Carrel tells me that the war has produced in France a race of warriors—men who eat, sleep, and think only in terms of war. He says that one day, while on his way from one part of the front

## THE EARTHQUAKE

to another, as he passed through a half-ruined village, he was hailed by a burly whiskered soldier, in a major's uniform, who was leaning against a shattered wall.

"It was my old friend X.," he explained with a smile, "though at first I failed to recognize him. When I had last seen him he was a clerk in the *Crédit Lyonnais*. He had been shy, anæmic, narrow-chested, clean-shaved. Now he was vigorous and masterful. Moreover, he had a huge beard, which added to the fierceness of his appearance. He had lost all interest in anything except fighting, and could talk of nothing else. The years prior to the war no longer counted for him. He had become a gladiator. He will never be anything else. When the war is over he will spend the rest of his life reliving the 'battles, sieges, fortunes,' he has passed through."

"But they are not all like that!" I protested. "How about the young men and the boys?"

"X. is not an unusual case," he answered; "there will be many like him. For the youth of France—those who are left—the war has done much. It has sobered them and taught them to bring their wills and their bodies into subjection. It will mean a great deal to France to have the rising generation know the value of discipline and the necessity of obedience to authority."

"Do you think the war will have the same beneficial effect on American youth?" I asked.

## MY SOLDIER SON

"Undoubtedly!" he replied. "Your young men will come back with a new respect for law and order; a new regard for their government; a keener appreciation of the ideals which that government represents."

I hope that Dr. Carrel is right. Certainly they will return with a new and broader outlook, a sense of solidarity as Americans, and a militant patriotism that will bode ill for any purveyor of sedition, however insidious his methods.

But I cannot see these young men of ours, after the excitement of trench raiding and fighting above the clouds, settling down very speedily to desk work in office-buildings, however airy. Neither will they be willing, the majority of them, to resume the threads of their interrupted education. There will be a new movement toward the ever-vanishing frontier, a setting westward in the search for wider ranges, for life in the open air.

"So for one the wet sail arching through the rainbow round the  
bow;  
And for one the creak of snow-shoes on the crust;  
And for one the lake-side lilies where the bull moose waits the  
cow,  
And for one the mule-train coughing in the dust."

We reached the shed twenty minutes before train time, and sat down on a damp bench under a smoking kerosene-lamp. Over our heads the rain drove upon

## THE EARTHQUAKE

the roof in a never-ceasing tattoo. Jack was inhaling the omnipresent cigarette. A pall—I believe that is the word—had fallen upon our conversation, engendered by our mutual consciousness that all this mere informative talk was beside the mark.

I hadn't come down there in the mud to try the beef and test the beds. I knew it and he knew it. The beds and the beef had nothing to do with what had been uppermost in our minds and hearts all day. But the words wouldn't come. Jack lit another cigarette and changed his position, and a water-soaked tramp edged in and slumped down in the corner, with his head on his chest. More than ten minutes had gone by. Then Jack suddenly said awkwardly:

"I suppose you and mother would like to know before I go what I think about things—religious things, you know. Some of us get together by ourselves here and talk them over now and then. We didn't before we came. But, you see, we all can't help knowing, of course, that we mayn't come back; and—and—so you wonder if there would be anything else afterward if you didn't."

I nodded. It had come.

"Well, honestly, dad"—how sweet the word was!—"I don't know. I haven't much faith, I guess, of the orthodox kind; but I can't help feeling that it doesn't make much difference so long as you know that you're doing the right thing."

## MY SOLDIER SON

"No," I muttered. "But how do you know it's the right thing?"

He shook his head.

"But I do know it!" he said. "To fight—to die—for one's country is bound to be the right thing. It doesn't matter that I can't tell you why. It's the thing itself that's worth while—not the reason."

In the grimy old shed I put my arm about his strong young shoulders.

"Listen, Jack," I whispered, though the tramp was oblivious of our presence. "Years ago I heard a Memorial Day address by Judge Oliver Wendell Holmes, and it made such an impression on me that I learned it by heart. It is the answer to my question. What he said was this:

"'I do not know what is true. I do not know the meaning of the universe. But in the midst of doubt, in the collapse of creeds, there is one thing I do not doubt—that no man who lives in the same world with most of us can doubt—and that is that the faith is true and adorable which leads a soldier to throw away his life in obedience to a blindly accepted duty, in a cause which he little understands, in a plan of campaign of which he has no notion, under tactics of which he does not see the use!'"

Jack made no reply.

"'For high and dangerous action,'" I continued, "'teaches us to believe as right beyond dispute things

## THE EARTHQUAKE

for which our doubting minds are slow to find words of proof. Out of heroism grows faith in the worth of heroism.' ”

The bell beside the track began to ring its staccato warning, and above the noise of the rain there came the whistle of the up-train. We got to our feet.

“That’s pretty good stuff,” he said in an embarrassed fashion. “You might send it to me, if you will. I’d like the other fellows to see it.”

The sailing of Jack’s regiment was a topic never referred to by us, save indirectly. Sometimes Helen would begin a sentence and abruptly discontinue it, such as, “I suppose he’ll need—” And I would have verbal evidence of what she was thinking of in addition to the pile of neat packages and bundles that gradually accumulated on the hall-table for Jack to take away when he should come to say good-by. But we had a sneaking idea that maybe it wouldn’t be necessary for him to go after all.

Down-town they were saying that the war would be over in six weeks—in three months, anyway. News of a peace conference might come at any moment. Germany, it was predicted with confidence, had no wish permanently to antagonize the United States, and would see to it that hostilities would be over long before our boys could get within range of the guns. That hope was always shining through the gray clouds

## MY SOLDIER SON

of our depression. And we were so proud of him that we'd hardly condescend to speak to those of our friends who hadn't a service-flag with at least one star on it.

Being the father or the mother of a soldier is the next thing to being one yourself. Unconsciously I aped Jack's manner of standing, and walked and talked in a military sort of way, arrogating to myself a special knowledge of the purposes of the War Department by virtue of my vicarious connection with the service. We didn't more than half believe that anything more would come of it. Germany would probably back down at the last minute and there would be all the honor and glory without any actual fighting, and Uncle Sam would be sitting at the head of a Thanksgiving peace table, handing around slices of Turkey as he saw fit.

Of course I knew the transports were sailing right along, and that we had thousands of troops on the other side; but that knowledge was literary rather than actual. It was like the background on an enlistment poster. The phrase "Our boys are already in the trenches" didn't mean anything more to us than "Food is Ammunition," or "Ring It Again!" You can't have your boy lounging in a brand-new uniform, smoking a cigarette by the library fire, with the sun pouring in through the Seventy-second Street window, and grasp the fact that in three weeks he may be sitting in a listening post within ten yards of a gang of Prus-

## THE EARTHQUAKE

sians who would cut his throat rather than bother to take him prisoner. You can't do it. You don't believe any of it. Things like that might happen to other men's sons, but never to yours. So we dreamed on, as the sailing was postponed from week to week.

Then late one afternoon, a message came that if I wished to see my son before he sailed the next morning I must immediately present myself at a certain place, and receive the special written authority to accompany him aboard the transport which had been accorded to me by the War Department. I hung up the receiver weakly. That curt voice on the other end of the wire had paralyzed my motor centres. They couldn't be going to ship him off like that, without giving him a chance to say good-by to his mother! It wasn't human! But I had no time to waste if I was to meet him, for the place of embarkation was a long distance from New York City.

I scribbled a hurried note for Helen, who was downtown, put the bundles and packages in a valise, summoned a taxi, and within an hour had been given my pass and full instructions as to what I must do. I took a train to a certain nameless town, and shortly before midnight was hurrying down a side street leading to an empty railroad yard near the water-front.

I can see every detail of it as vividly now as I could then. Night after night I find myself there in my dreams. It is always the same—my sufferings are



## MY SOLDIER SON

the same. I am stumbling along in the dark in my fur coat, carrying my bag, when out of the shadows a vague figure lurches forward and holds a bayoneted rifle against my chest. Under the yellow circle of a flash-light my letter of identification and pass are examined and I am told to pass on. Half a block farther along I am stopped again and the process is repeated. Once more, and at last I am turned loose into the network of tracks where the trains are to come in.

Over on the other side half a dozen forms are standing around a small fire, and I clamber across the railroad-ties and make myself known to them. They are transportation officers and express surprise at the permission granted me. I mention the name of my partner Morris. "Oh, Morris!"—that explains it. Apparently he is some sort of hidden power who lurks behind the arras at Washington. They show great respect for Morris's partner, and I hand round cigars, inquiring when the train is expected. The senior officer says it ought to be in in about an hour—it is due already; but they had a hot box or something. He expresses unmitigated contempt for the railroad corporation whose enforced hospitality we are enjoying.

It is cold and we huddle together, warming our finger-joints over the tiny blaze—a large one might attract attention; for the government has succeeded in keeping the location of the place a secret and no one may approach within half a mile without proper

## THE EARTHQUAKE

identification. We talk of things military and naval in a desultory way. The transportation officer thinks the war will last not less than five—very probably ten years. I am just recovering from the shock of his prophecy when a green semaphore swings up at the lower end of the yard. "Train's coming!" he says, and we all hasten after him down the track.

Round a curve chugs an old-fashioned locomotive with a dirty headlight. It stops, jerks, and heaves again, banging the cars together behind it like empty coal-scuttles. There is no light except in the driver's cab; every car-window is tightly closed, with curtains drawn. Slowly the antediluvian engine, with its antiquated smoke-stack, yanks its burden into the middle of the yard and, with a final cough, relapses into silence.

No sound comes from inside the cars, though cracks of light are visible round the edges of the windows. Are there really men inside, or is it a chain of "empties"? The officer climbs to the platform and pokes his head into one of the cars. A rookie appears and swings down to the ground, followed by a dozen others, who move toward the engine. They are the baggage-squad charged with the duty of transporting the soldiers' kits to the waiting steamer.

Where is Jack? I begin to be impatient. The quiet is getting on my nerves. No one speaks above a whisper. One of the officers taps me on the shoul-

## MY SOLDIER SON

der, leads me to one of the farther cars, and goes inside. In a few moments he comes back with a tall, coated figure. The form doesn't look natural, somehow. Then two hands are clapped on my shoulders and Jack's voice whispers: "Hello, sir! Bully of you to come! Sorry I couldn't see mother again. But you'll explain to her, won't you?"

Together we stand in silence under the canopy of stars, as one by one the sleepy men drop off the steps of the car and form in loose lines outside. Jack leans over and tells me that the boys are all very tired; that the cars are of the vintage of 1875—exhumed from some forgotten limbo for this purpose—and practically without ventilation. Do I know where he could buy them some coffee? I shake my head. Apparently no provision has been made for any refreshment at this stage of their journey. Lights flash here and there about the yard. The pile of luggage has melted away. The fire has died out.

A noncom hurries up and says something to Jack in a low tone. There is a movement of expectation along the waiting line of men, which stiffens up and shuffles together. There is a muffled word of command; the line faces toward the right and the men march off in single file. I follow along with Jack, who has taken my bag away from me and tucked his arm under mine. We feel our way along the yard, skirt a pile of coal, stumble across a vacant lot covered with

## THE EARTHQUAKE

empty tin cans and clinkers, and come to a wharf at which is tied up an ancient side-wheel steamer belonging to a bygone era of navigation. She shows no lights except a riding light. Her decks are empty.

We mount the gang-plank and pile into the dingy saloon. Kerosene-lamps are smoking in brackets along the walls, the window-shades are closely drawn. It is dank and stuffy in there, but the fellows begin to joke, referring to the old tub as the *Mayflower*. I have a strange feeling of unreality. This is not my idea of a departure at all. It is more like the aftermath of a Yale-Harvard game, the anticlimax of coming back in a crowded smoking-car after it is all over. The men compose themselves in various attitudes of discomfort and try to go to sleep. Many lie down on the floor. Three repose at full length on the table in the centre. I try unsuccessfully to think of something to say to Jack.

At the end of forty-five minutes we hear the gang-plank being run in and there is a jingle from the engine-room. The wheels begin to turn and the old side-wheeler begins to strain and groan. From forward the transportation officer beckons us to join him and we ascend to the pilot-house, where we find seven or eight others. All is darkness, except for the aura round the binnacle and the glowing tips of the cigarettes.

We are about a quarter of a mile from shore and

## MY SOLDIER SON

moving quite rapidly. A hundred yards ahead in the starlight I can make out the narrow hull of a destroyer, which leaves a sharp, white wake in which we follow. Here and there are scattered lights—distant windows along the water-front. We light one cigarette after another, and I produce a couple of pounds of cake chocolate, which is quickly and gratefully consumed.

The time drags slowly. The shore fades out, then draws near again. Sometimes there are many lights; sometimes almost none. We pass a lighthouse. I recognize — and then —. Then I recognize everything at once. I know where we are. A faint pale line begins to show along the horizon and the side-wheeler staggers against the chop made by the tide running against the wind.

We turn, and just ahead I see the huge gray bulk of a converted German ocean-liner against a pier. The destroyer has swung away, running free of us in a wide circle. Behind us I now discover three other similarly convoyed side-wheelers. From the smokestacks of the transport the smoke is pouring in dense masses, but no lights gleam from her port-holes. She is simply a black blot against the sky-line. The officers say good-by to me; we leave the pilot-house and go back to the saloon.

“All right, boys!” says Jack. “A couple of hours more and you can get your phonographs going.”

## THE EARTHQUAKE

"Rather set my jaws going!" retorts a fat boy, and the crowd laughs good-naturedly.

The steamer bumps against the wharf and the gang-plank is run out. The men pick up their rifles and adjust their clothes. Jack and I lead the way on to the dock, on the opposite side of which yawns the black hole in the side of the transport. The company files off one boat and directly on to the other, where each man is handed a slip with the number and location of his berth.

The system is perfect; the embarkation takes place almost in silence.

"Well, father!"

Jack has turned to me and, smiling and happy, lays his arm on my shoulder. The moment has come, then. What shall I say? There was so much of encouragement and affection that I had carefully planned to put into my parting speech—how we were all so proud of him and would think of him every moment until his return; how, of course, he would return—the war certainly would be over soon; and how we knew he'd do his duty; and so on.

How fatuous it would all sound! He knows everything I want to say—perfectly well. There is nothing to make a fuss about. Yet I can't let him go like that—just like that—without saying anything! While I hesitate, a private hurries up and, first saluting him, touches Jack upon the arm.

## MY SOLDIER SON

"Capt. Stanton, the colonel wants you!"

"All right!" answers Jack. He bends over quickly and touches his lips to my cheek.

"Good-by!" he exclaims cheerfully. "Kiss mother for me—and Margery!"

"Good-by, Jack! I hope—never mind! Good-by, old fellow!—Oh, Jack——"

But he has gone.

The last company marches aboard and the sliding-door is pulled to. The smoke is coming even thicker now from the transport's funnels, and there is a white froth rising from beneath her stern. Silently the hawsers are slipped. Over behind the city's castellated sky-line there is a yellow glow, and the water of the river is tinted with purple. A cold wind creeps round my ankles. It is chilly after the warm pilot-house.

Slowly the great leviathan separates herself from the wharf and backs away, out into midstream. Not a light is visible. Not a man is above deck. She looks like an interned empty German liner whose mooring is being shifted. Yet inside her black hulk ten thousand of the youth of America are starting on their great crusade for the maintenance of humanity—that freedom shall not perish from the earth.

## VII

### WHY JACK HAS GONE

“So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty. For he shall have judgment without mercy that hath showed no mercy \* \* \* .” James ii : 12, 13.

Why have I sent my son across the seas to fight?

Two years ago, on the Sunday following the torpedoing of the *Lusitania*, a party of sixteen people was assembled at luncheon in the Long Island country house of a distinguished New York lawyer. Inevitably the sole topic of conversation was the attitude the United States should adopt toward the German Government, which had thus wantonly murdered so many helpless American men, women, and children. Of those present several were jurists of wide reputation or persons of more than ordinary intelligence and standing in the community. After a lengthy, general discussion of that barbaric act, I remember saying that I wished that our government would immediately declare war upon Germany or, at least, sever diplomatic relations pending what reparation was possible and adequate guarantees that such methods of warfare should be discontinued. To my surprise there was little echo



## WHY JACK HAS GONE

to these sentiments, and upon my asking our host to submit the question to a vote of those at the table, only one other man and his wife agreed with me and mine.

Our friend smiled tolerantly.

"How could war prove anything but an inconceivable disaster!" he remarked, as he pushed back his chair. "It must be the last—and only the last—resort."

That already seems a lifetime ago. My friend, as he readily admits, neither knew what he knows now nor conceived it to be possible. Had he done so he would have been then, as I was, for war. To-day that same middle-aged lawyer—that conservative stand-patter—is touring the country stimulating by his eloquence hundreds, if not thousands, to enlist. He is for the war—to a finish. For peace only with victory.

I do not say that my friend is a different man, but he is an outraged one. He exercises still the discriminating processes of mind that have made him a leader of the bar, and which enabled him to weigh more or less calmly the specious arguments advanced by Germany for her ruthless undersea warfare. The mental habits of a lifetime rendered him incapable of adopting any other attitude toward Germany than that which he would have maintained toward a fellow practitioner in a court of justice—that of courteous consideration. He was accustomed to give every devil

## THE EARTHQUAKE

his due. He assumed that even if the German General Staff were, as matter of law, guilty of piracy or murder, their guilt was due to a mistake in, or at least a colorable construction of, the law upon their part—that they had, as we would have expressed it, some sort of “a case.”

Then suddenly he discovered that he had made an almost incredible mistake. He awoke to the fact that the blows of his opponent were not accidentally but intentionally below the belt, that his adversary was not a misguided gentleman but a cold-blooded and heartless liar, thief, and murderer. In a word, the earthquake has jarred my friend into a realization of the significance of the present struggle, much as it did the English, after they had for a year or so treated the Germans like “good sports.” For we now perceive that this war could not have been averted, that it was inevitable, and had circumstances been such that we could have gone into it at the time of the *Lusitania* incident, peace with victory might be ours by now—not merely an optimistic confidence that the United States is too populous and too rich and too generally lucky not eventually to win. Yet we are to-day as a nation almost as hazy over what we are up against as my technical lawyer friends were two years ago, when they pondered so solemnly Germany’s camouflage about international law.

For while technically the violating of our rights

## WHY JACK HAS GONE

as neutrals may have been the basis of our declaration of war against Germany in 1917, just as it was of the war of 1812 with England, and, before that, with the Barbary pirates, we are actually engaged in a death grapple with a malign and conscienceless enemy for the ideals of Christianity as against those of a cruel and remorseless paganism.

We had regarded Germany as a Christian nation whose people believed, as we believe, in the love of God for all men, and in that of all men for each other. We had read the output of her political philosophers with a half-amused tolerance, accepting them as the mere theories of intellectuals as we had the metaphysics of her scholars. It was as if some friend of ours had said half jocularly: "Well, you know that I'm really an anarchist." We would have believed it about as much. We felt that, after all, beneath his bullying manner—his habit of *impuniten*—the Teuton had a warm and generous heart. We could not and most of us do not even to-day realize that the teachings of Treitschke, Nietzsche, and Bernhardi—constituting the "Religion of Valor"—the inhuman doctrine of might as right—is "inspired by the pulpits as religion; taught by the universities as philosophy; disseminated by the press as policy and political necessity; embodied in the army as national loyalty and duty, and focussed in the Kaiser as the minister of the Almighty."

## THE EARTHQUAKE

What is this philosophy or religion?—this “German Idea”? It is the doctrine that as between states or nations there is no such thing as law or morals; that in the struggle for existence between them war is the supreme and necessary test by which the “fitness” of the survivor must be determined, and that in making war the state need recognize neither truth, decency, nor humanity.

Curiously enough, it was from my lawyer friend that I learned this.

I had gone to dine with him in order that we might quietly discuss the best method of bringing home to the people of the United States the necessity of our rendering prompt and substantial aid to the Allies, and we had retired to his library after a frugal meal quite unlike the lavish hospitality of former years. We still had our pipes, however.

“Stanton,” he said gravely as he handed me the matches, “there are two essentials in the campaign of education which you have undertaken. The first is to convince people that the strictest economy must be practised if we are to win the war; the second, surprising as it may seem, is that we *must* win the war—that no half-way decision is possible—that only a peace forced upon a vanquished Germany will end the struggle.”

“Don’t you think that the people at large understand the necessity of victory?” I inquired.

## WHY JACK HAS GONE

"No," he replied with earnestness, "I do not. I even doubt if you do."

"What do you mean?" I demanded.

"I mean that, while Washington is alive to the situation, the people as a whole are not, and that individually few of us have grasped the fact that German political philosophy and military practice are one and the same. For example, you recall the turmoil occasioned by Bethmann-Hollweg's reference to a treaty being only 'a scrap of paper'? Well, that was no new thing. It is part of the German creed. The cardinal principle of their statecraft is deceit. Bethmann-Hollweg's now historic phrase is nothing but the echo of the declaration of Frederick William IV in his speech from the throne on April 11, 1847, when he said, 'All written constitutions are only "scraps of paper."' The scrap-of-paper theory as well as the phrase itself is an old story in German diplomacy."

"That is rather interesting," I admitted. "And, I confess, new to me. But that sort of thing isn't sincere, is it? I assumed it was mere bluster."

My friend laughed.

"Not much. It's gospel! I've been making a rather careful study of the statements, written and delivered, of Germany's rulers, statesmen, and military leaders, with respect to her aims, policies, and the conduct of war. I propose printing my researches

## THE EARTHQUAKE

some time for the benefit of the public." \* He grew suddenly stern.

"I tell you," he added fiercely, "we are contending against the most damnable philosophy that ever poisoned the body politic of a civilized people! In international relations no such thing as truth or honor is recognized."

"Do you actually mean to say that the Germans do not recognize any sanctions of law or morals whatsoever so far as the state is concerned?" I asked, for the proposition seemed to me preposterous.

"Precisely," he answered. "That is elementary with them. Their fundamental principle is that, according to the laws of evolution by which the world is governed, the Hohenzollerns by divine right should rule Prussia; that Prussia for the good of Germany should rule Germany; and that Germany for the good of the world should rule the world. Any means to accomplish that end are moral."

"Is that what they mean by 'Kultur'?" I asked.

"'Kultur,' he quoted, "'is the spiritual organization of the world, which does not exclude bloody savagery. It raises the demonic to sublimity. It is above morality, reason, science.'" †

"What nonsense!" I ejaculated.

\* "Out of Their Own Mouths" (D. Appleton & Co., New York, 1917), from which admirable compilation much of the material for this chapter has been taken.

† Mann in the *Neue Rundschau* for November, 1914.

## WHY JACK HAS GONE

"Nonsense? By no means! Hear what the distinguished Professor Lasson\* has to say on the subject:

"'Between states there is but one sort of right—the right of the stronger. . . .

"'There is no legal obligation upon a state to observe treaties. . . .

"'A state cannot commit a crime. . . .

"'Treaty rights are governed wholly by considerations of advantage. . . .

"'A so-called small state is not a state at all, but only a tolerated community, which absurdly pretends to be a state. . . .

"'The weak are prone to cherish a comforting belief in the inviolability of the treaties that assure them their miserable existence. But one of the functions of war is to prove to them that a treaty may be a bad one, that circumstances may have changed. There is only one guaranty—adequate military force. . . .'

"Heinrich von Treitschke, the most influential political philosopher of Germany during the last century, like his great pupil Bernhardi, taught that war was a biological necessity,† that any attempt to abolish it was unwise and unmoral, and that it should be ruthless to the last degree, . . . saying 'for the state

\* *Das Kulturideal unter dem Krieg*, pp. 11-13, 31, 32, 61, 105, 130.

† "Politik," vol. I, p. 100.

## THE EARTHQUAKE

self-assertion is the greatest of the commandments; for it, this is absolutely moral. And for this reason it must be declared that of all political sins the most abominable and the most contemptible is weakness; this is, in politics, the sin against the Holy Ghost.' 'The living God,' he assures us, 'will take care that war shall always return as a terrible medicine for the human race.'

"Vernon Kellogg, who saw a great deal of the German General Staff when the Great Headquarters—*Grosses Hauptquartier*—of all the German armies of the west was in the Ardennes—where often the 'All-Highest' was there in person—says,\* in explanation of his conversion from pacifism:

"'Professor von Flussen—that is not his name—is a biologist. So am I. So we talked out the biological argument for war, and especially for this war. The captain-professor has a logically constructed argument why, for the good of the world, there should be this war, and why, for the good of the world, the Germans should win it, win it completely and terribly. Unfortunately, for the peace of our evenings, I was never convinced. That is, never convinced that for the good of the world the Germans should win this war, completely and terribly. I was convinced, however, that this war once begun must be fought to a finish of decision—a finish that will determine whether or not

\* *Atlantic Monthly*, August, 1917.



## WHY JACK HAS GONE

Germany's point of view is to rule the world. And this conviction, thus gained, meant the conversion of a pacifist to an ardent supporter, not of war, but of this war; of fighting this war to a definite end—that end to be Germany's conversion to be a good Germany, or not much of any Germany at all. . . .

“‘The creed of the *allmacht* of a natural selection based on violent and fatal competitive struggle is the gospel of the German intellectuals; all else is illusion and anathema. . . . As with the different ant species, struggle—bitter, ruthless struggle—is the rule among the different human groups.

“‘This struggle not only must go on, for that is the natural law, but it should go on, so that this natural law may work out in its cruel, inevitable way the salvation of the human species. By its salvation is meant its desirable natural evolution. That human group which is in the most advanced evolutionary stage as regards internal organization and form of social relationship is best, and should, for the sake of the species, be preserved at the expense of the less advanced, the less effective.

“‘It should win in the struggle for existence, and this struggle should occur precisely that the various types may be tested, and the best not only preserved, but put in position to impose its kind of social organization—its Kultur—on the others, or, alternatively, to destroy and replace them.

## THE EARTHQUAKE

“‘The danger from Germany is, I have said, that the Germans believe what they say. And they act on this belief. Professor von Flussen says that this war is necessary as a test of the German position and claim. If Germany is beaten, it will prove that she has moved along the wrong evolutionary line, and should be beaten. If she wins, it will prove that she is on the right way, and that the rest of the world, at least that part which we and the Allies represent, is on the wrong way and should, for the sake of the right evolution of the human race, be stopped, and put on the right way—or else be destroyed, as unfit. If the wrong and unnatural alternative of an Allied victory should obtain, then he would prefer to die in the catastrophe and not have to live in a world perversely resistant to natural law. He means it all. He will act on his belief. He does act on it, indeed. He opposes all mercy, all compromise with human soft-heartedness. . . .’

“‘There is no reasoning with this sort of thing, no finding of any heart or soul in it. There is only one kind of answer: resistance by brutal force; war to a decision. It is the only argument in rebuttal understandable of these men at headquarters into whose hands the German people have put their destiny. . . .’

“I confess,” continued my friend, “that two years ago when you were here I didn’t understand this thing. I didn’t take the Kaiser seriously when I read his

## WHY JACK HAS GONE

proclamation to the army of the East in 1914. I thought it bombast. Well, it was Germany's creed."

"I forget," said I. "What was it?"

He opened a scrap-book.

"Remember that you are the chosen people! The spirit of the Lord has descended upon me because I am the Emperor of the Germans!

"I am the instrument of the Almighty. I am his sword, his agent. Woe and death to all those who shall oppose my will! Woe and death to those who do not believe in my mission! Woe and death to the cowards!

"Let them perish, all the enemies of the German people! God demands their destruction, God, who, by my mouth, bids you to do his will!"

"Or take this frank confession of Harden's: 'One principle only is to be reckoned with—one which sums up and includes all others—force! Boast of that and scorn all twaddle. Force! that is what rings loud and clear; that is what has distinction and fascination. Force, the fist that is everything. . . . Let us drop our pitiable efforts to excuse Germany's action; let us cease heaping contemptible insults upon the enemy. Not against our will were we thrown into this gigantic adventure. It was not imposed on us by surprise. We willed it; we were bound to will it. We do not appear before the tribunal of Europe; we do not recognize any such jurisdiction. Our force will create

## THE EARTHQUAKE

a new law in Europe. It is Germany that strikes. When it shall have conquered new fields for its genius, then the priests of all the gods will exalt the war as blessed.' " \*

"There speaks the truth!" I exclaimed.

"The truth!" he retorted. "Yes, spoken by a German militarist only in wine, arrogance, or inadvertence. To the gospel of force, mendacity, hate, and brutality are indispensable. Hence, the German rulers have always cultivated hatred of their enemies. 'War is not a society game,' they say, 'war is hell-fire.'" †

"If war is hell-fire, as this kind of war certainly is," I returned with conviction, "what are the men who practise it?"

"I can't tell you," he answered. "I do not think that during war they are men at all. They tell me that a full-blooded German almost never is tried in our criminal courts, but if one does appear there it is apt to be for some atrocious form of murder or manslaughter. War seems to transform them into homicidal maniacs—the mere thought or discussion of it to produce an obsession in their minds. Can there be any doubt but that hatred and bitterness and terrorizing make for immediate military effectiveness? Of course they do. Yet to what horrors do they lead!

\* *Zukunft*, August, October, 1914, cited in the *New York Times*, December 6th, 1914.

† Walter Bloem in the *Kölnische Zeitung* for February 10th, 1915.

## WHY JACK HAS GONE

Let me read you from the diaries of German soldiers written during the invasion of Belgium."

I listened with growing indignation for several minutes—until I could stand it no longer.

"Stop! for God's sake, stop!" I begged, half nauseated at what he had read me. Was this the kind of war to which I had sent our gentle, gallant boy across the ocean!

My friend raised his eyebrows.

"It is all done under the personal supervision of the Almighty by his personal representative—William Hohenzollern—if we are to accept the latter's statement," said he. "But this William-God or God-William partnership is a very special and private affair. Indeed, Professor Wilhelm Ostwald has pointed this out with unconscious humor in an interview in the *Stockholm Dagen*, in which he said: 'I will say, however, that in our country God the Father is reserved for the personal use of the Emperor. In one instance he was mentioned in a report of the General Staff, but it is to be noted that he has not appeared there a second time.'"

I tried to laugh. The whole thing was too fantastic, too barbaric, too horrible. I recalled Heine's statement in "*De l'Allemagne*," that while Christianity had to a certain extent softened the brutal belligerent ardor of the Teuton, it had not been able to destroy it; and that when the Cross should be broken, the fe-

## THE EARTHQUAKE

rocity of the old-time fighters, the frenzied exaltation of the Berserkers will again burst forth. "Then," he declares with uncanny prophecy, "the old war-gods will arise from their legendary tombs and wipe the dust of ages from their eyes; Thor will arise with his gigantic hammer and *demolish the Gothic cathedrals.*"

. . . . .

Is there any doubt but that this war is between paganism and Christianity?

In place of the precepts of the gentle Christ in the Sermon on the Mount we have Nietzsche's "Thus Spake Zarathustra:

"Ye shall love peace as a means to new wars—and the short peace more than the long.

"Ye say it is the good cause which halloweth every war? I say unto you: It is the good war which halloweth every cause. War and courage have done more great things than charity. . . . Be not considerate of thy neighbor—what thou doest can no one do to thee again. Lo, there is no requital.

"Thou shalt not rob! Thou shalt not slay!—such precepts were ever called holy. . . . Is there not even in all life robbing and slaying? And for such precepts to be called holy, was not truth itself thereby slain? . . .

"This new table, oh, my brethren, put it up over you. Become hard."

The German golden rule is well put by Karl Peters:

## WHY JACK HAS GONE

"It is foolish to speak of a justice that should hinder us from doing to others what we ourselves do not wish to suffer from them." \*

The truth of the matter is that Germany is not, and has not been for a long time, a Christian nation. The Rev. Isaac J. Lansing of Ridgewood, New Jersey, in a recent address† has pointed out that in order to fulfil the purpose of Germany to dominate the world by an army engaged in ruthless war, unrestrained by morality and humanity, it became necessary to dispossess the Christian ideals of morals and humanity previously held by the German people. The most violent and deliberate attacks upon Christianity were resorted to in order that this political philosophy might penetrate and control the nation. The gospel and the life of Christ were assailed as mythical; it was declared that the greatest mistake in Germany's history was made in accepting Christianity from the Roman Empire in the fifth century; that it was an alien religion derived from an effete and decadent nation; that it was foreign to German spirit and genius. Treitschke and his millions of followers repudiated the Beatitudes and prepared to found a world empire based on a new pagan religion, which made it necessary for them incidentally to destroy the Scriptures.

\* *Not und Weg*, pp. 13-14.

† "What We Are Fighting—and What For," given before The Rotary Club of New York City.

## THE EARTHQUAKE

Now when the German war-lords, statesmen, and philosophers embarked upon their attempted conquest of the world they had at their disposal the most perfect war-machine ever devised. It was and is a marvel of foresight and invention. Their plans had been laid for years in the minutest detail. To them victory seemed a matter of course—a question of mere addition—so many days to Rheims, so many hours to Paris. And they would have marched into Paris on schedule time, and they would have won the war and dominated the world but for a single element which they had discounted as of no moment—the loyalty of the rest of mankind to the moral ideas which these Germans had cast aside as an impediment to their development—the ideals commonly referred to as Christian—of honor, humanity, and self-sacrifice. They would have won the war but for the “scrap of paper” and the submarine.

Though the Kaiser thinks himself a wiser man than old Bismarck, had Bismarck been alive Germany would have won the war, since Bismarck would never have deliberately elected to place his country in what the rest of the world regarded as the moral wrong. Speaking before the Reichstag February 6, 1888, upon the question of whether Germany should be the aggressor in a war upon Russia, the shrewd old warrior said: “If in the end we proceed to attack, the whole weight of the imponderables, which weigh much heavier than



## WHY JACK HAS GONE

material weights, will be on the side of our enemies whom we have attacked."

The imponderables! Justice, truth, pity, charity, loyalty—mere ideas—offspring of the brain—and heart—not even "scraps of paper," things lighter than air—yet more powerful, as the Kaiser has discovered to his cost, than the heaviest of Krupp's cannon or the best disciplined divisions of "shock" troops; ideas that have spread over the whole world—Christian, Hebrew, Buddhist, or Mohammedan.

For when William sought to procure the "Jehad," or Holy War, by virtue of which he expected two hundred and fifty million Mohammedans to fall upon and massacre the Christian inhabitants of their lands, he found that, with the exception of his vassal Turkey, every Moslem country repudiated his demand although the "Jehad" was legally declared by the requisite ecclesiastical authority. Even so, in Armenia two million hapless people have died since the beginning of the war, victims of massacre, of torture, of starvation, and of the horrors of deportation and slavery. The "imponderable" sentiment which this has engendered may well prove the millstone which will drag down the Kaiser into the turbid stream of everlasting infamy and disgrace.

Yet we are not fighting against the war-lord and his military advisers alone—the "military party" of which so much has been said in the spoken—as well as

## THE EARTHQUAKE

in the written word. At best the militarists could do no more than drag an unwilling nation into war. They could not have forced whole armies composed of adult men to cast aside all the restraints of honor and humanity unless those millions had already been inoculated with the virus of deceit and brutality. For the German nation has whole-heartedly and unitedly, in a degree to astound civilization, supported its military rulers, and their policy has been universally commended. No one man, no group of men is responsible for this thing. It is due to the insidious spread of an evil idea which has brought material prosperity to a (at heart) materialistic nation. The cause of this inconceivably awful slaughter is the irreconcilable antagonism of German political philosophy with the faith and ideals of the civilized Christian nations of the world, and of those nations who while loyal to faiths bearing other names, are, nevertheless, followers of its principal ethical teachings.

This atrocious German military philosophy knows no mercy and stops at nothing. It frankly believes that falsehood, torture, rape, crucifixion, slavery, massacre, and murder are justifiable. It laughs at the appeal of benevolence and morality.

A German victory—or an inconclusive peace—would mean the ultimate realization of the German idea that Germany for the good of the world must rule the world. This has been taught in her univer-

## WHY JACK HAS GONE

sities as philosophy and in her pulpits as religion. The German nation unquestioningly accepts it and intends to force the rest of the world to accept it. This is the "Kultur," which they claim is "above morality."

Kultur teaches that there is only one sort of right—that of the stronger. It argues with specious profundity that in the relations of nations with one another there can be no such thing as truth or honor.\* Frederick the Great taught that the Germans must make it their "study to deceive others in order to get the better of them."†

The Germans believe themselves to be a nation of supermen and the Kaiser the war-partner—not of the God of Humanity—but the "gute alte Gott" of the pagan North—the War God—who revels in the shrieks of women and the torture of children, in bloodshed and cruelty. "I am His sword, His agent!" declares William Hohenzollern. "Let all the enemies of the German people perish! God demands their destruction—God, who by my mouth, bids you do His will!"‡

To accomplish this "divine" will the German military authorities believe that any means are warranted—the mowing down of crowds of helpless civilians with machine-guns, the cutting off of the breasts of women, the battering in of the skulls of the wounded

\* *Das Kulturideal unter der Krieg*, pp. 11-13, 31, 32, 61, 105, 130.

† Works of Frederick II, Berlin Ed., 1848.

‡ Proclamation of the Army of the East, 1914.

## THE EARTHQUAKE

with rifle-butts. "Be as terrible as Attila's Huns!" ordered the Kaiser.\* "It is better to let a hundred women belonging to the enemy die of hunger than to let a single German soldier suffer."† "All prisoners are to be put to death," ordered General Stenger, in Belgium.‡ Writes a Bavarian private: "During the battle of Budonwiller I did away with four women and seven young girls in five minutes. The captain had told me to shoot these French sows, but I preferred to run my bayonet through them."§

This is the concrete result of what the Germans call "The Religion of Valor" and "The Gospel of Hate." Says one of their spokesmen: "Must Kultur build its cathedrals on hills of corpses, seas of tears, and the death-rattle of the vanquished? Yes, it must."||

If Germany wins the war, the United States will either be paying tribute to the Kaiser or German soldiers will be bayoneting American girls and women in Jersey City rather than take the trouble to shoot them.

If Germany wins, all our ideals of truth, justice, and humanity—which we call Christian—will be trodden down into bloody mire under the iron heel of the

\* The Kaiser's speech to the Chinese Expeditionary Force, July 27, 1900.

† General von der Goltz, "Ten Iron Commandments of the German Soldiers."

‡ Orders of the Day, August 26, 1914.

§ Johann Wenger, Peronne, March 16, 1915.

|| Walter Bloem in the *Kölnische Zeitung*, Feb. 10, 1915.

## WHY JACK HAS GONE

Kaiser's armies, and the coming generation will be taught that there is no God but the merciless God of Battle who speaks through Germany's treacherous tongue and by her brutal sword.

We are fighting for far more than our lives. We are fighting for the future of the race. We are fighting to turn back the bloody tide of tyranny and barbarism. We are fighting for our faith in the Fatherhood of God and in the Brotherhood of Man.

That is why Jack has gone.

## VIII

### “OF SHOES—OF SHIPS—OF SEALING- WAX——”

“Not a wheel must turn, not a human back be bent in the production of non-essentials until the war is won! Not a brick must be laid, not a beam lifted into place, not a shovelful of earth displaced in private or corporate construction until the shipyards and munition-factories have their full quota of workers. The use and manufacture of luxuries and unnecessaries must cease. Just as our soldiers at the front must be drilled and disciplined in order to defeat the Germans, so the nation at home must be drilled and disciplined into a great universal army of savers. The one is as essential as the other.”

“That seems a bit exaggerated!” said I to myself, as I laid aside my morning paper and put on my overcoat; nevertheless, what I had read remained subconsciously in my mind.

Ralph Sanderson had asked us to motor out and spend the week-end at his country place. It was a clear October day, and as we glided through the up-town streets everywhere the Stars and Stripes were flying and the service-flags, hanging before shops and houses, told how each particular family had responded to the call of duty. Occasionally we passed a company of men in khaki, and once a full regiment, headed

## “OF SHOES—OF SHIPS——”

by its band and playing “Over there—over there—over there!” It was an inspiring, a thrilling spectacle.

Yet, apart from the flags and the music, I could see very little change in the life about us. Fifth Avenue was literally choked with motors, many of them with two men upon the box. The congestion at Thirty-fourth and Forty-second and Fifty-ninth Streets had never before approached what it had been since my return. And now as we hummed along the boulevards we overtook an uninterrupted stream of pleasure-cars, all bound for a holiday. We passed a half-completed church with workmen literally swarming over its scaffoldings. In front of each of the multitude of apartment-houses swaggered about stalwart uniformed porters. Across the East River several blocks of jerry-buildings were being put up. Everywhere sign-boards advertised new plays and restaurants, with hideous caricatures of young ladies and their young boulder friends partaking of broiled live lobster for the purpose of luring the public to “groves,” “gardens,” and “palaces,” there to dine not wisely but too well.

Presently we escaped the semirural regions of gas-tanks, road-houses, and motor-service depots, and achieved the dense rusticality of the estates of the Long Island gentry. It was, let us say, somewhere in that region of darkest agriculturalism adjacent to Roslyn and Glen Cove, where excellent country-build-

## THE EARTHQUAKE

ing sites can be obtained as low (on bargain-days) as three thousand dollars per acre—if one buys whole-sale—that we came into view of what at first I took to be a mediæval fortress.

Two steam-rollers were smoothing the avenue leading to the portal in order to facilitate the movement of some twenty carts filled with building materials. The air rang with the rat-tat-tat of the riveting-machine, the shouts of the workmen, and the pound of the sledge-hammer. Several hundred carpenters, steam-fitters, plumbers, and electricians must have been at work inside this modern palace which with its wings could not have been less than four hundred feet in width, while the grounds were dotted with laborers laying out roads, making flower-beds, and setting out trees. There was, in fact, a small army at work.

"That's Bing's new place," said Sanderson. "Some Waldorf—what?"

"Who's Bing?" I inquired.

My friend gazed at me incredulously.

"Didn't you ever hear of 'The Polygon Pictures Company'?—that's Bing. They say he's made a little matter of nine million dollars this year, and he's keeping it safe for America; doesn't want to let it get out of the country, he says."

"Bing must be a bird!" I remarked in disgust.

"He is," readily agreed Sanderson. "There are



## “OF SHOES—OF SHIPS——”

several other Bing-birds down here—though not of the same name.”

Since we were on our way to the extreme eastern end of Long Island we stopped for luncheon at one of the numerous golf-clubs scattered along the high-roads among the building sites. One differentiates the estates of the gentry from the golf-clubs by the amount of bunkers and bunk. There was a fair-sized crowd in the restaurant being served by from fifteen to twenty able-bodied waiters; and, over the course, I counted from the veranda seventeen other employees sedulously engaged in rolling putting-greens, cutting grass, replacing divots, and similar productive tasks. There were thirty-eight motors—including my friend’s—parked in the circle in front of the club-house.

“How many men are there on your pay-roll?” I asked.

“Between fifty and sixty, counting the house-servants, and in the garage, stable, and on the links,” he replied. “We absolutely need every one of them to keep the club going.”

Before the end of our day’s trip we passed a dozen more large country houses and three other new golf clubs and links in process of construction. On these last the work was obviously being rushed. The war had evidently not retarded in the slightest degree these private enterprises either collective or individual. Of course people must have summer places, hot-

## THE EARTHQUAKE

houses, and golf-clubs! Farther along the shore my host pointed out—I thought with some local pride—an immense estate where a large force of men were employed in raising fancy shrubs and hothouse plants, building rock gardens, and in general turning the sandy Long Island landscape into a small modern Versailles.

We arrived at our destination—a comfortable colonial mansion over a hundred years old on the outside, but entirely reconstructed so far as the interior was concerned—about five o'clock in the afternoon and had tea on an enclosed veranda, served by a young English butler and a second man in livery. There had apparently been no alteration in the size of our friend's ménage, but later he took occasion to call attention to the fact that we were partaking of what he was pleased to call a "war dinner," in consequence of which he seemed convinced that he was placing his native country irreparably in his debt. Simply because he had Graham bread instead of white, and turkey instead of lamb!

Incidentally he had the butler open a bottle of champagne, on the ground that to drink it would help the French! The war was the sole topic of conversation, and Sanderson speedily showed that he was exceptionally well informed upon every political and military phase of it. He recurred constantly to the assertion that he made a point of observing minutely

## “OF SHOES—OF SHIPS——”

every governmental regulation or suggestion, and let drop the fact that he had contributed largely to the Red Cross, Y. M. C. A., and other sorts of war relief, and had as well invested twenty-five thousand dollars in Liberty Bonds.

I let him rave on. What use was it to point out to my well-meaning but misguided friend that though his four courses were literally within the Hooverian limit, every one of them violated it in spirit, since in each case the most lavish use was made of expensive condiments, seasonings, and preserves, requiring large quantities of butter and sugar. The fact that these were used on fish instead of meat was the merest incident. He would have retorted that he was obeying orders in having a meatless and wheatless day, and that that was all there was to it.

Well, it might have seemed ungracious for a guest to discuss the champagne, and on the whole we concluded to hold our peace. But the sight of the two sturdy young Englishmen, solemnly stalking around the table passing liqueurs when they ought to have been in the trenches, gave me an unpleasant feeling, as well as the inclination later to lure one or both of them out of the ambush of their pantry and stand them up against the wall and find out why they were not where they belonged.

But I find that butlers, second men, and chauffeurs “are different,” somehow. It is so easy to become

## THE EARTHQUAKE

dependent upon particular servants. Most women would rather have a chop handed round by dear old stupid James than a golden pheasant served by a maid, however chic. Knee-breeches for some are the insignia of respectability, and, of course, one can be nothing if not respectable!

Last autumn the following appeared in a leading New York daily in the column devoted to "society":

Sept. 12—Possibility of the drafting of aliens, as proposed by the joint resolution in Congress, has caused consternation among the big — villas, in most of which English and French men servants are employed. On the estates many Breton French are employed as gardeners and caretakers.

Mrs. . . . has an English butler and four other men servants who would be subject to the draft. Mrs. . . . has four English men servants. Mr. and Mrs. . . ., Mrs. . . ., and Mrs. . . ., Mrs. . . ., Mr. and Mrs. . . . and others would lose either their butlers or helpers in the draft.

In spite of the calls to service many aliens employed in the cottages have remained in this country, tempted by increases in wages and other inducements. Besides men who handle the affairs of the butlers' pantries others in the cottagers' kitchens would be affected by the resolution. The wealthy sojourners hold these men to be indispensable in serving dinners and conducting entertainments.

Though the rich woman has cheerfully given out of her abundance, has bravely watched her sons go off to the front and her husband intern himself in Washington for the period of the war, she has generally flinched so far when it came to the lesser sacrifices involving

## “OF SHOES—OF SHIPS——”

discomfort or even merely inconvenience. She has procrastinated in the hope that the war might end or some valid excuse turn up which would relieve her of the disagreeable necessity of giving up her cherished butler and second man.

Up to this time the patriotism of the wealthy has been shown far less in the direction of household economy than in their public activities. To be sure, dinners are shorter on the whole; there are fewer able-bodied butlers and second men about; the dressmakers complain that their fashionable customers are wearing their last year's gowns, but there are still dinners and butlers and dresses very much as before.

No change is as yet particularly noticeable. It is really easier for a rich woman to give ten thousand dollars to the Red Cross than to give up her maid; far easier to work several hours at the local War Relief than to surrender the chauffeur and the motor in which she drives there. These thoughts occurred to me as my wife and I partook of the war dinner provided by our host, a meal that would probably have caused a considerable elevation of Mr. Hoover's eyebrows.

The paper that morning had contained a table showing the comparative wealth and man power of the Central Powers and the Allies. Everybody had read it, and since it was so striking, Sanderson had cut it out and kept it.

# THE EARTHQUAKE

UNITED STATES AND ENTENTE ALLIES			
	Wealth	Area (Sq Miles)	Population
United States, Alaska, and Philippines . . . .	\$250,000,000,000	3,741,828	110,000,000
British Empire— Ireland, Canada, India, Africa, and Australasia . . . .	130,000,000,000	12,745,766	437,500,000
France and all other Allies . . . . .	196,000,000,000	12,268,253	868,800,000
Total . . . . .	\$576,000,000,000	28,755,847	1,416,300,000
TEUTONIC ALLIES			
Germany . . . . .	\$80,000,000,000	208,780	65,000,000
German Colonies . . .	(no estimate)	1,027,820	*14,000,000
Austria-Hungary . . .	25,000,000,000	260,034	49,000,000
Turkey and Bul- garia . . . . .	3,000,000,000	1,463,448	36,000,000
Total . . . . .	\$108,000,000,000	2,960,082	164,000,000
Total, U. S. and Entente Allies . . .	576,000,000,000	28,755,847	1,416,300,000
Total, Neutral Powers . . . . .	51,900,000,000	11,017,182	176,400,000
Grand Total . . . . .	\$735,900,000,000	52,733,121	1,756,700,000
COMPARISON			
United States and Entente Allies . . .	78.3%	73.5%	80.7%
Teutonic Allies . . .	14.7%	5.6%	9.3%
Neutral Powers . . .	7.0%	20.9%	10.0%

\* A D McLaren, of the *Manchester Daily Guardian*, says (*Atlantic Monthly*, Dec., 1917) that there was in 1913 a total colonial population of Germans of 24,389, including officers and soldiers in garrisons.

## “OF SHOES—OF SHIPS——”

“The boches haven’t a chance!” confidently proclaimed our host after dinner on the strength of the foregoing figures. “Not a chance! It’s all over but the shouting! The Allies have five times as much money and eight times as many men.”

Unfortunately, the average New York bond-broker is not only statistically sophisticated but sceptical as well.

“My dear Sanderson,” I returned, “I don’t wish to discourage you, but those figures are highly misleading. A hundred thousand men on the firing-line are worth a hundred million in Siam, Bechuanaland, and Hindu Kush. You’ve got to have your men where they’ll be some good to you. So you can just eliminate all the Hottentots and Esquimaux that are figured in on the Entente side of the balance-sheet. And what good do Russia’s one hundred and eighty millions do us? Or Japan’s seventy-two millions, for that matter? On the other hand, the Teutonic allies draw on populations exclusively within their own frontier battle-line. No; you can’t dope out the winner on any such general basis as that, interesting as the figures may be.”

Sanderson seemed unconvinced.

“Well, anyhow,” he argued, “money counts! Germany can’t win if she’s only got one hundred and eight billion dollars as against five hundred and seventy-six billion on the side of the Allies. Why,

## THE EARTHQUAKE

you told me only a day or so ago that the United States could pay the interest on a hundred-billion-dollar Liberty Loan at four per cent if we simply gave up — what was it? — chewing-gum, alcohol, tobacco, snuff, moving pictures, soda-water, and candy!”

“That’s quite right,” I acquiesced, complimented at his recollection. “We *could* pay the *interest*.”

“Then we can go on fighting forever!” he announced. “What’s the paltry five billion of the last Liberty Loan compared with what the United States could raise by taxation or voluntary subscription if it really set out to do it?”

“Well,” I reminded him, “we shall have a good chance to find out, for before June 30, 1918, the United States will have assumed the burden of raising twenty-one billions of dollars as its first year’s appropriation toward winning the war. That, my dear sir, is more than the value of all the railroad bonds and stocks in the entire country. It is, as Mr. Vanderlip recently pointed out, only five billion less than the total expenditures of this government from the year 1791 to January 1, 1917, a period of one hundred and twenty-six years.”

My wife, who was sitting with us, raised her hands in dismay.

“I hear what you say, John,” she declared. “But I don’t know what it means. I can’t take it in. I wonder if any man can!”



## “OF SHOES—OF SHIPS——”

“There is only one who pretends to do so,” I replied. “And—maybe he’s mistaken!”

“All the same,” insisted Sanderson, as we climbed up the stairs, bedward, “take it from me we’ll find the money will be there when the time comes! Do you realize that if everybody in the United States gave only ten cents a week to the government it would amount to five hundred and seventy-two million dollars a year? We’re the richest nation on earth, and our money is going to win the war!”

“It would if we could eat bank-notes or shoot dollars at the Germans!” I retorted as a final volley.

“What rot!” he yawned. “Well! Good night! See you in the morning! What do you want for breakfast—ham or bacon?”

. . . . .  
A telegram from Morris in Washington to the effect that he would be at the New York office on Monday morning brought us back to the city before the expected conclusion of our visit. But during the time we had spent at Sanderson’s country place nothing had occurred to alter our impression that our host actually believed that he was doing his full duty to his country and living up to the highest standards of patriotism, to say nothing of those of the Food Administration pledge-card that hung in the coat-room window—so long as he ate hot corn muffins for Sunday luncheon.

## THE EARTHQUAKE

I fear there is a certain elasticity about Mr. Hoover's requirements readily availed of by the self-indulgent. We cannot afford to be indefinite if we are to win this war. There is, too, a very general misconception to the effect that by saving food in accordance with the wishes of the administrator we shall also save money. Of course this is an utterly mistaken idea. Though it may be true that if one is patriotic enough to save white flour, meat, and bacon in accordance with Mr. Hoover's request he may, as a result, possibly become so thrifty that he will economize all along the line, and so incidentally save money, the fact remains that the purpose of the pledge-card is simply to induce people, so far as possible, to go without those staples of food of which there is a shortage in order that we may furnish them in the needed quantities to our Allies and our own men abroad. In point of fact, I have found it just a shade more expensive to be a perfect Hooverite than not to be one. The only motive for Hooverism as such is patriotism, pure and simple.

. . . . .

On my arrival at the office on Monday morning I found my two partners already there. I had not seen Morris since my departure for the Orient in December, 1916, and I was surprised at the change in him. He had grown quite gray and the lines on his face and the weariness in his eyes indicated only too plainly

## “OF SHOES—OF SHIPS——”

the strain he had been under during all the hot summer months when, instead of sitting on his veranda at Bar Harbor, he had toiled at the Treasury Department, with the thermometer hovering around a hundred degrees. There was, too, a gravity about his demeanor that was new.

He quite agreed with us, he said, about our business. There was nothing in it at the present juncture from any point of view. Besides, the government needed clerks and stenographers, and by discharging ours we should be releasing labor. Then he turned to me and asked what I was going to do. I had been asking myself that question for some time. My son Jack was already on the other side; my wife was working day and night at War Relief, and my daughter was studying in a business college eight hours a day. I was the only person in my family who wasn't doing anything; which was embarrassing, since I had done a good deal of talking on the subject of patriotic duty.

What I really wanted to do was to get as near the front as I could—some sort of a military job—but my hopes had been recently shattered when the medical examiner of one of the big life-insurance companies had turned down my application for a policy on the ground that I had a bad heart. I felt like a spring chicken, but that doctor had cooked the chicken, so far as active service was concerned.

Of course I could get busy on a Liberty Loan cam-

## THE EARTHQUAKE

paign or a Red Cross drive, but I wanted to do something more than merely solicit subscriptions. I had volunteered my services to the Food Administration, but its officials had not as yet seen fit to avail themselves of my offer. I had written to the War Department, the State Department, and the Navy Department without result.

My pride had suffered a distinct shock and my self-esteem had become very much deflated since finding myself so little appreciated. I had always rather fancied myself a really distinguished sort of fellow—for a bond-broker. Now it appeared, however distinguished I might be, I wasn't wanted—at present, of course!

"Yes, John! What are you going to do?" he repeated. "Isn't it time you started on something?"

"That is the question," I replied. "I want to do the work that I am best fitted for; where it will do the most good. But I can't seem to find any job. Middle-aged men are a drug on the market. Of course I can roll bandages or solicit contributions; but I'd like to get nearer the front."

To my astonishment my ordinarily pacific partner scowled and pounded a fist into the palm of his other hand.

"Nearer the front!" he cried impatiently. "Nearer the front! Anybody who can make people understand that it isn't getting men for the trenches that's our difficulty, but how to feed and arm them, and to keep

## “OF SHOES—OF SHIPS——”

them fed and armed—*that man* is going to do more for this country than any ten thousand chaps in khaki who account for ten times as many Germans. In the first place, of course, we were faced with the problem of how to raise and train our armies. We solved that pretty well. Our next task was to raise money. We've done better than we expected. There's been an encouraging response. The future looks bright enough in that respect. But what people don't understand yet is that furnishing the government with money—even twenty billions of dollars—is only half, if it's even that, of what we've got to do."

"I don't fully understand," I interrupted. "If the government is given the money to spend, why can't it go out and buy what it wants and hire what men it needs?"

"Because," answered Morris, "the mere fact that we turned over to the government five billion dollars in the last Liberty Loan won't help us at all unless the government, in its turn, can exchange the money for the things we want—food, uniforms, guns, labor. The success of the loan merely means that five billion dollars will be credited to the government, and that the bank balances of the bond buyers will be debited by a similar amount. Raising money, by itself, won't raise a single potato more than we had before.

"Of course it's an elementary proposition, but people don't seem to get it through their heads. They think in terms of money when they ought to think in

## THE EARTHQUAKE

terms of goods and labor. The American public has an idea that you can solve any problem by passing legislation and appropriating money. We vote a billion dollars for aeroplanes and destroyers, and then sit back comfortably with the idea that they're already bombing Berlin and sinking submarines. It's a delusion of grandeur. Congress can vote money until it's black in the face and yet accomplish nothing, unless the people supply what's really needed—the materials and the men.

"Now, where are they coming from? Remember that our mills and our mines are producing no more than heretofore and that two million men out of our thirteen million workers have been drafted. Let us assume that we, as a nation, have been obliged to produce for our efficient support a quantity of essentials we shall call  $x$ . Well, the government comes along and appropriates twenty billion dollars—practically all of which is to be spent in this country—to carry on the war. If, after it is raised, all the money is to be used for the purposes for which it was voted, we shall have to produce this year not only the quantity  $x$ , which we absolutely needed before, but also twenty billion more in goods and labor. Where is it coming from?"

"Preposterous!" I exclaimed. The proposition was simplicity itself, but it seemed utterly impossible of accomplishment. "It can't be done!"

"I don't know whether it can or not," replied Morris. "There are so many unknown factors in-

## “OF SHOES—OF SHIPS——”

volved. There is the factor of accumulated surplus wealth—the factor of yearly saving in the past—for, of course, as a people we have always saved a proportion of what we have produced, only it isn't in a form that can help us much—houses, railroads, and so on. There is the great unknown factor of how far our ten million physically able women can and will take the place of men and how far the men who have hitherto been regarded as too old can be made useful.

“There is going to be a tremendous rejuvenation of the middle-aged. The age limit on railroads, for instance, will probably be pushed up five years. Old and decrepit men will be utilized for the ornamental sinecures, such as doorkeeping.

“Then there is the practically unknown factor of how much  $x$  really is and how much of our total annual production has been for non-essentials. It may be much larger than we think. And, finally, there is the unknown factor of how much we, as a people, can save over and above what we've saved before.

“Well, to make a long story short, it's a tremendous, staggering question; and the more people I talk to about it and the more I study it the less I am able to come to any conclusion as to what the task confronting us actually amounts to in billions. Congress has appropriated twenty billions of dollars for war purposes. Of this about five billion will go for soldiers' pay and similar objects, not requiring any production to meet them; but the balance of fifteen billion is to



## THE EARTHQUAKE

be spent in the purchase and manufacture of war materials and in other ways requiring labor and production. Now, assume that the annual pre-war production of the United States was twenty-five billion, this will mean an added production of fifteen billion, or a total of forty billion, as against our previous twenty-five. How are we going to supply the materials and labor to meet this new and unprecedented demand? Well, first by extending and speeding up producing. We ought to be able to increase our annual production of goods and labor from twenty-five to thirty billion. That is only an increase of twenty per cent. But that leaves a deficit of ten billion! Where is it coming from? The only answer is that it must be *saved*! We must save forty per cent of the amount of our annual pre-war production of twenty-five billion—that is, we must deny ourselves and release to the government goods and labor amounting to about ten billions of dollars! Yet it is a sum larger than the human mind can comprehend.” \*

*Estimated annual pre-war production of United States in materials and labor.....	\$25,000,000,000
Appropriations during first year of war, to be expended on materials and labor.....	15,000,000,000

Total materials and labor necessary to meet (a) ordinary requirements and (b) first-year appropriations (as above).....	\$40,000,000,000
Increased production in materials and labor....	30,000,000,000

Balance of materials and labor it is necessary to save if we are to carry out our war programme	\$10,000,000,000
---	------------------



## “OF SHOES—OF SHIPS——”

“That is the basis of Mr. Vanderlip’s thrift campaign and his saving certificates, isn’t it?” asked Lord. “The theory is that if we lend the money to the government we shall have just so much less left to spend on ourselves, and so will have to go without. As you say, the banking transaction doesn’t affect the economic situation. There isn’t any more flour or labor now than there was before the Liberty Loan was floated. The important thing is going without the flour and labor—more important even than lending to the government the money we save by going without.”

“That’s it, exactly!” declared Morris. “It isn’t the money that the government needs so much as the things—things and the labor to make ’em; and we can get those things and that labor by inducing idlers to work, accelerating or increasing production, or by saving. Now when all is said and done, practically the only way to enable the government to get the goods and the labor it needs is by going without them ourselves. As Blackett says: ‘Every cent of private expenditure that is not really necessary for health and efficiency involves a diminution of the goods and services available for winning the war. Extravagance and waste are treason.’

“One thing is certain. The government may have all the money in the world at its disposal, but unless those who control the goods and labor will release them to the government, our boys over in France will

## THE EARTHQUAKE

lack even the necessities of life. We have got to cut off our production of everything the government does not need and cut down our consumption of everything else, in order to furnish the things the government must have to carry on and win the war.

"Now, the very first requirement is ships; ships to get our armies over to France; ships to keep them supplied with food and ammunition. We've got the soldiers, but there aren't enough ships to carry them over. The neck is too small for the bottle. Why? Because private enterprises engaged in comparatively unimportant work are taking the men away from the shipyards by offering higher wages than the latter can afford. With the German submarines sinking shipping at the rate of *six* million tons a year Congress has authorized the construction of *five* million tons. Added to the tonnage in the yards, which we have already requisitioned, this makes a total of 10,623,000 of deadweight tonnage. To get these ships afloat we need five hundred thousand mechanics. We have less than two hundred thousand; and, at that, the various yards are competing with one another for their services. Every ship once in the water will need men and officers—one hundred thousand for every thousand ships.

"It is the most gigantic task—the most vital task—in the history of the war. To fail in its accomplishment means defeat. Yet the yards are, for the most

## “OF SHOES—OF SHIPS——”

part, working only one shift of men a day when they ought to be running twenty-four hours out of the twenty-four, Sundays and holidays included. This in spite of the fact that riveters are getting as high as one hundred and seventy-two dollars per week! Not far from Philadelphia there's a big shipyard that ought to be running night and day. It can only get sixty per cent of the labor it needs. Its total force is a little over five thousand men. Near it is a phonograph-factory employing eight thousand men. The shipyards could utilize thousands of those phonograph workers but can't get them. Yet the newspapers hesitate about going after the talking-machine fellows because they are such big advertisers.

“It's the same situation everywhere,” he continued. “People are simply asleep—that's all! The government needs five thousand stenographers to-day in Washington and seven thousand firemen. When I left there on Friday it had no prospect of getting them. It needs five hundred chauffeurs, on the jump, to drive supply-trucks—and it has to wait; and yet there are ninety-two thousand chauffeurs in the metropolitan district of New York alone!

“Night and day—day and night,” went on Morris heatedly, “the guns are roaring over on the western front, hurling an unceasing torrent of shells into the German lines. Nine million dollars' worth of shells cross the trenches every day. The war has become a

## THE EARTHQUAKE

contest of workshops. But the shops lack workers, while rich people roll round in their motors—some of them with two men on the box!”

“Really, it’s almost criminal!” I cried.

“When you think that in the early days of the war whole brigades were wiped out of existence for lack of artillery support, due to a failure of ammunition, you realize that it *is* criminal! The government could get forty-five regiments of mechanics out of New York’s chauffeur class alone. If we gave up our cars the factories which would otherwise be making the new models for next year could either release their men for the shipyards or could be converted themselves into munition works. The materials, steel, iron, rubber, nickel, copper, leather, woollen, etc., would be available for the needs of the army. The petrol would be used behind the lines at the front.”

“In England,” said Lord, “the National War Savings Committee had placed at its disposal an immense amount of poster space, and it plastered it with signs, among others: ‘Don’t ride a motor-car for pleasure.’ Naturally, timid motorists were a bit nervous lest they might be attacked on the highroads by the indignant proletariat. It wasn’t a bad idea.”

Morris laughed grimly.

“You wait! It won’t be a question of posters. If we can’t get men to build the ships that are going to win this war, we’ll take the men off the front seats

## “OF SHOES—OF SHIPS——”

of the pleasure-cars—conscript 'em. We'll have to or our boys will just be gun fodder! As Mr. Vanderlip says:

“‘The only way to increase the number of men and shells and supplies available at the front to win the war is to reduce the competition of private individuals for the goods and services that the belligerent governments require for war needs. This can be done only by increasing production of the things which are necessary and reducing the consumption of everything else.’”

“That is well put,” I exclaimed. “It makes clear Lloyd George’s statement: ‘Extravagance costs blood—the blood of heroes.’”

But Morris did not heed the interruption.

“I know of a very large carpet-factory near here which closed down voluntarily and changed over its spindles—at a comparatively trifling cost—so that it now manufactures army duck for tents, wagon-covers, and so on. If the owners hadn’t done so of their own accord they ought to have been compelled to do so by the action of the public in refusing to buy carpets.

“But no matter how much the public is willing to do its part we’ve still got to reckon with the laborer. Wages have been doubled in many businesses, but reports come in from nearly all the great industries, mines, and shipyards telling of men who refuse to work more than half-time—content, under the im-

## THE EARTHQUAKE

proved conditions, to make as much in five hours as they formerly did in ten. Meantime the ship-building programme lags, coal production is insufficient, and industry is generally undermanned in spite of the increase in wages. Sooner or later labor conscription in some form is sure to result; but there will be a fierce political struggle before it is secured."

"That would be pretty drastic!" hazarded Lord.

Morris turned on him sharply.

"Suppose you needed a chauffeur for your motor, you wouldn't try to induce a fellow driving an ambulance in France to take your job, would you? Or if you needed a mechanic in your business you wouldn't try and tease a chap out of a factory where he was turning shells for the Allies! Well, it's the same thing if you *keep* the chauffeur or *keep* the mechanic."

"Right!" agreed Lord.

"There's an awful lot of rot talked about 'business as usual'! There won't *be* any business if we lose this war! We've got to have ships—*ships*—SHIPS! To quote Vanderlip again: 'The person who buys an unnecessary thing, however small its cost and however well able he is to pay for it, is not helping the government by going on with "business as usual," but is upon the contrary competing with the government for goods and services. The article he purchases may be of a character altogether different from the things the government requires, but labor must be used in

## “OF SHOES—OF SHIPS——”

producing it, whatever it is; and labor that is used to produce the needless thing is labor taken away from the great task of producing necessary goods.’ I’ve got here a compilation by the Federal Bureau of Labor statistics showing the number of workers on the pay-rolls at the end of August, 1917, as compared with August, 1916, a year ago. They show a reduction in all the industries examined except ready-made clothing and automobile manufacturing.

“The rich have been among the first to give themselves and their sons to the country. Now it is up to them to set the example of sacrificing their comfort and convenience to win the war. The poor man can hardly be expected to give up his little luxuries or cut down his pleasures if he sees the rich woman buying furs and jewelry, and motoring around with a footman beside the driver on the box of her limousine. She’s got to walk! And it’s up to you, John, to make her!”

His face cleared and a smile broke over it.

“I’ve got your job cut out for you, old man! You must be the prophet of this new doctrine—that the people at home must make sacrifices to save the lives of the boys in the trenches; that money-savers are life-savers. You must educate the people to the fact that just as the soldiers have got to be drilled and disciplined, so the people of the United States have got to be drilled and disciplined into a great universal army of savers!”

## THE EARTHQUAKE

"It's a great cause!"

"The greatest in the history of the nation!"

"I'll do what I can!" I agreed heartily. "I can see already how easy it would be to release an enormous amount of materials and labor by a slight individual sacrifice." \*

"One of the easiest ways would be for every family to reduce the number of the servants employed in its

\* The report of the Commissioner of Internal Revenue indicates that the people of the United States spent, during the fiscal year ending June 30, 1917, upon

Whiskey.....	\$576,328,361
Beer.....	1,518,237,725
Cigars.....	460,845,055
Cigarettes.....	183,175,150
Tobacco (smoking and chewing).....	289,746,087
Snuff.....	22,995,538

This is a total of..... \$3,051,327,916

This shows the "economic slack" that could be taken up if necessary. But it doesn't stop there, by any means. If the men did not smoke, chew, and drink, their wives and children would still abandon themselves to the delights of chewing-gum, soda-water, candy, and the movies. A recognized authority puts these hardly vital expenditures at the following figures for the nation:

Chewing-gum.....	\$50,000,000
Candy.....	300,000,000
Soda-water.....	200,000,000
Moving pictures.....	450,000,000

Total.....	\$1,000,000,000
Add for tobacco and liquor (as above).....	3,000,000,000

Total..... \$4,000,000,000

Four billion dollars would be the interest on a Liberty Loan of *one hundred billion dollars*. We expect to put the Kaiser where he belongs for considerably less than that. We do not need to worry about mere money.



## “OF SHOES—OF SHIPS——”

household,” answered Morris. “There are sixty thousand servant-girls in this city alone. Look at the hundreds of able-bodied men employed to walk up and down in livery in front of apartment-houses, theatres, and stores, the thousands of scene-shifters, electricians, ticket-sellers, painters, ushers, and doormen at the theatres. And I can’t help reverting to those ninety-two thousand chauffeurs! But there isn’t any use trying to particularize. There should be no luxuries bought or sold. We should cherish our coal and wood as if they were precious metals. Indeed, the fuel administrator and the priority board are considering the curtailment of the use of coal and coke in the production of eleven important commodities, namely, pleasure vehicles, brewery products, candy, toys, table glassware, pottery, athletic goods, jewelry, silverware, window-glass, electric signs, and electric-sign lighting. Whoever saves, helps. Every time we spend anything it means that somebody has to work for us. Whenever you refrain from travelling you save the coal used for producing the motive power of either steam or electric roads, and gasolene for the buses and taxis. If people walked more instead of riding, fewer public conveyances would have to be run, and the labor of those who run them could be diverted to more useful employment.

“The British committee have put it in a nutshell when they say: ‘To save money is to release labor,

## THE EARTHQUAKE

goods, and services for other purposes. If we lend the money we save to the nation, we lend to the nation the power to command the labor, goods, and services that we have released.' You can't state it any better. We must all save on everything! As soon as we have enough of anything—that is, as soon as the point of efficiency has been reached—we should save. The chief things to do without are those that do not promote efficiency—the non-essentials. Pianos, for instance—jewelry, for which, by the way, we spend two hundred million dollars every year in the United States—furniture, house decorations, pictures, hangings—the list is legion!

“The men who have made watches and clocks must be put at making time-fuses. Those who machined the cylinders for automobile-engines must turn out shells and guns. The iron-workers who have been employed in the construction of skyscrapers must become ship-builders. The spinners and weavers who made expensive dress-fabrics must manufacture khaki and cotton duck. The thousands and hundreds of thousands of men who have hitherto been engaged in making and distributing such non-essentials as perfumery, sporting-goods, furniture, expensive china, silks, laces, pictures (both stationary and moving), and the scores of other things that are paid for but do not contribute to our health or efficiency must be freed to work and fight for the nation.”

## “OF SHOES—OF SHIPS——”

“There’s one thing on which the women can come in strong,” interjected Lord, “and that’s clothes. They should only allow themselves one evening dress. And by universal consent there should be no new styles until the war is over.”

“In England,” assented Morris, “they put up placards all over London, reading:

‘BAD FORM IN DRESS!

TO DRESS EXTRAVAGANTLY IN WARTIME IS  
NOT ONLY UNPATRIOTIC—IT IS

BAD FORM!’

That got ’em! Even the women who were selfish slackers made themselves look as dowdy as possible.

“There isn’t any beginning or end to it. There’s a real shortage in sugar, for instance, but there wouldn’t be if it were not for the preposterous amount which we Americans eat. The Department of Commerce estimates that before the war the per-capita consumption of sugar was sixteen pounds in Germany, twenty-eight in France, thirty in Great Britain, and about fourteen, I think, in Italy. Now, our per-capita consumption of sugar in 1880 was *thirty-nine and one-half pounds, and it has increased to such an extent that it is to-day eighty-one pounds for every man, woman, and child in the United States.* We could cut our demand in half, and then be using more than England did before the war. Then there’s leather——”

Lord laughed.

## THE EARTHQUAKE

“ ‘The time has come,’ the Walrus said,  
‘To talk of many things;  
Of shoes—of ships—of sealing-wax—  
Of cabbages—and kings!’ ”

he quoted.

“If we look out for the shoes and the ships, the kings will be taken care of in due course,” smiled Morris. “But there’s one final factor that you will have to deal with, John. You will find that all the manufacturers of luxuries and unnecessaries—and the unessentials far outnumber the luxuries—will agree with you up to a certain point, will often, in fact—like the automobile-manufacturers—go more than half way in their co-operation, but—nobody wants to be put out of business. The jewellers, for instance, have pretty consistently declined to take orders for things made of platinum in view of the government’s need of it. But they want to go on making jewelry! Now, jewelry won’t help win the war. On the other hand, those jewellers—the workmen I mean, of course—could be utilized by the government in making the more delicate parts of aeroplanes. Every dressmaker, perfumer, graphophone manufacturer, jeweller, every maker of things not absolutely essential to the efficiency and health of the people—or at any rate to the extent that his output is not needed for national efficiency—should be obliged by the fact that the people deny themselves

## “OF SHOES—OF SHIPS——”

his particular luxury to reduce the number of his employees. These will gradually find other employment. The lace-maker, fitter, gem-cutter, turner will shift about into other sorts of work; everybody will ‘move along one’ until at the end of the line there will be one more riveter in the shipyard. We must not wait for the men themselves to do it. It wouldn’t be human nature. They wouldn’t know how, or they’d think they didn’t. It must be accomplished by the law of supply and demand—and *we* control the demand. Go to it, John, old boy! Your work is cut out for you!”

“Yes,” I assented, “my work is cut out for me! But what shall I say if one of these jewellers or perfumers asks me how he is going to live?”

Morris’s face grew stern.

“Plenty of men are going into the trenches to die,” he thundered. “The war must be fought here as well as at the front. One man in the shipyards to-day is worth three in the trenches!” \*

\* “We are at war; and for some reason the business interests have not yet chosen to realize it. Nine-tenths of the business men of the country are either preaching ‘business as usual’ or are urging the people to spend freely and extravagantly, because they think the circulation of money will win the war. The chief reason for the terrible railroad congestion has been the effort to carry on the normal traffic of peace, which before the war began was overtaxing the railroad facilities, and to add to it the tremendous new war traffic without increasing the facilities. And it could not and cannot be done.

“When Germany entered the war the whole industrial system of the empire was changed. Even the railroad system was com-

## THE EARTHQUAKE

Yet in the face of the present exigency people continue to waste fuel and labor for their mere pleasure. Only this morning I received this letter:

BURLINGTON, N. C., Dec. 13, 1917.

This morning a party of hunters from the North reached Greensboro, N. C., too late to catch the morning train going east, due to arrive here about nine o'clock. As no other train is operated until the afternoon, which reaches here at 5 P. M., a special train was chartered consisting of one large locomotive and two cars.

This appears to me a most outrageous misuse of railroad equipment and fuel. All of the cotton-mills in this vicinity have had coal confiscated from them in wholesale quantities "for the operation of Government troop-trains, etc.," our mill having lost in this manner about thirty car-loads, or sufficient to run us for over three months.

It is absolutely useless to protest, as the Southern Railway has the legal right to seize this coal, but when they use a portion

pletely reorganized, a fact that few people seem to know. The dozens of small railway systems existing in and operated by the separate German states were taken over by the imperial government, and welded together into a single great unified system under the control of a single administrative authority. Passenger traffic was cut ruthlessly, and the production of the unnecessary and the less necessary articles of ordinary consumption was immediately restricted, or stopped altogether. There has scarcely been a piece of furniture made in Germany since the war began. England tried 'business as usual,' but soon discovered the mistake.

"What have we done? Our only effort to curb the 'business-as-usual' doctrine has been confined to the solitary preaching of a few far-seeing and thoughtful men such as Frank Vanderlip. They have urged voluntary economy as a means of cutting down the production of less essential articles.

"How have the newspapers treated the campaign for voluntary economy? There is not a newspaper in New York which has, on its editorial pages, whole-heartedly and earnestly, day after day, supported this movement. The Hearst papers, at the rate of about one huge editorial a week, have even encouraged ex-

## "OF SHOES—OF SHIPS——"

of it to cater to the luxurious demand of wealthy sportsmen in a community which is about to freeze to death it is enough to turn the people into raving Bolsheviks. Will you not please give this fact publicity, withholding, of course, the name of your informant but mentioning the railroad and the points of origin and destination of the special.

I think this gives a fine opportunity for some constructive criticism of the so-called Fuel Administration.

As I walked up-town that afternoon, pondering on the importance of the task in which I was to take a part, I thought of the privations undergone for the sake of victory during the Civil War, of which I had often heard my father speak.

"My wife and I," said Asa Gray in 1862, "have scraped up five hundred and fifty dollars, all we can scrape, and lent it to the United States."

Lowell wrote in a private letter: "I had a little extravagance and foolish expenditure, and they have endeavored to prejudice the public against Mr. Vanderlip's teaching by asserting that his doctrine of economy, if followed out, would increase the earnings of the banks. An advertisement appearing in the Philadelphia *Public Ledger* stated that the campaign to encourage economy was a part of the German propaganda in this country! The advertiser was a jeweler.

"'Business as usual' is having its result in choked terminals, car shortages, and coal famines. The public press, which has openly or tacitly supported this infamous and injurious doctrine, is as much responsible for Garfield's order as any other agency.

"Until we can go directly to the cause of all our troubles, the stupid and senseless production of goods which can be dispensed with during the war, we shall never be able to end railroad congestion, and we shall not be able to do our proper share in the war. Until the editors of a few newspapers realize this fact and begin to say so, the present extravagance and hopeless waste and confusion will go on."—T. W. VAN METRE in *The New Republic*, Feb. 2, 1918.



## THE EARTHQUAKE

Italian bluster of brushwood-fire yesterday morning; but the times are too hard with me to allow of such an extravagance except on the brink of gelation."

"The first of January," wrote Emerson in 1862, "has found me in quite as poor a plight as the rest of the Americans. Not a penny from my books since last June, which usually yield five or six hundred a year; no dividends from the banks or from Lidia's Plymouth property. Then almost all income from lectures has quite ceased; so that your letter found me in a study how to pay three or four hundred dollars with fifty. . . . I have been trying to sell a wood-lot at or near its appraisal, which would give me something more than three hundred, but the purchaser does not appear. Meantime we are trying to be as unconsuming as candles under an extinguisher; and 'tis frightful to think how many rivals we have in distress and in economy. *But far better that this grinding should go on bad and worse than we be driven by any impatience into a hasty peace, or any peace restoring the old rottenness.*"

Later that evening, happening to pass a famous Broadway hotel, I entered the foyer to observe what change, if any, the war had brought about there. It was crowded with men and women in evening dress coming to supper after the theatre. Down in the grill-room the dancing-floor was packed with couples who were turkey and fox trotting to the crash of a



## "OF SHOES—OF SHIPS——"

jazz band; while those who could not find room to dance sat laughing, smoking, and drinking as if thousands of their fellow human beings were not at that very moment dying upon the blood-drenched battle-fields of France, Belgium, and Venetia.

Suddenly the lights were turned off and a smirking human doll, with a painted face and curls hanging down her bare back, began to dance suggestively beneath a spotlight, beckoning and posturing before the men at the tables. Disgusted, I ascended to the foyer and found myself face to face with the manager.

"Hello, Mr. Stanton!" he cried. "Been down for a little turn?"

"Yes," I answered savagely, "and I got one—but not the kind you mean."

"Sh!" he protested. "Look here; we're doing everything humanly possible to save! It's almost a joke what we give our patrons. We've 'saved everything out of the pig except the squeal.' I guess that Mr. Hoover will agree that no body of men has responded so nobly to his appeal for food conservation as the hotel men!"

I laughed a hollow laugh.

"I counted forty waiters serving ices and champagne," I remarked shortly. "Are you aware that there's such a shortage of wire that we may not be able to keep our armies properly supplied for the building of entanglements? Some day the government

## THE EARTHQUAKE

may step in here and stop your elevators in order to conserve the wire in the lifting cables! How would you like that?"

He shrugged his shoulders.

"Well," he answered, "have your joke! But you don't want us to close up, do you?"

I sat for a long time before the fire after I got home before going to bed, thinking of what I had heard and seen that day. I recalled how a well-known Englishman had said that his countrymen had made war for a year in their frock coats, and then suddenly had had to get down to their shirt-sleeves.

After I had retired I was unable to sleep. For hours I tossed from side to side, and then at last I must have begun to dream, for I found myself upon the front, somewhere near the Woëvre, looking for Jack. Crouched in the darkness of a narrow passage between two irregular walls of clay, I struggled forward to find my son.

"Bend lower!" muttered the vague shadow crawling beside me. Just ahead, in mid-air, the German star shells were breaking one after another in quick succession, casting momentarily a ghastly light on the inferno beyond the parapets. The dull pain in my ears became agony whenever one of the boche projectiles burst with a shattering roar in the black waste behind us. The earth rocked with the thunder of the guns, and underneath the higher rattle of the mi-

## “OF SHOES—OF SHIPS——”

trailleuses, the sharp detonations of the shrapnel, and the bark of the field-pieces there was a constant rumbling diapason in which all sounds merged into a deep bellow like that of a hungry war monster.

I stumbled on through the communicating trench, following my guide by the reflection of the German flares and ever and again stepping upon human hands and feet, some of which were withdrawn, while others offered no resistance save that of inanimate bone and flesh. Once I slipped in bloody mire and fell flat upon something soft. My companion shrugged his shoulders as I struggled to my feet.

“They haven’t given us any flash-lights for months!” he muttered. “Put your hand on my back.”

“Where is your coat?” I asked, for it was snowing and the icy mud was above our ankles.

“We have no coats!” he answered mockingly.

We crept on, it seemed by inches, until we debouched into the firing trench, under the parapet of which lay what seemed to be a row of human forms in agony.

“Where are your doctors? Your ambulances?” I demanded.

He laughed heartlessly.

“We have no ambulances—and no chauffeurs.”

I pressed my hands to my temples, for I seemed to be going mad.

“Where is my son?” I shrieked.

## THE EARTHQUAKE

A star shell burst over our heads and he pointed to a hatless figure in tattered khaki on the firing shelf.

"There!" he replied.

"Jack!" I called in terror. "Jack, come down!"

He turned and looked at me strangely—without recognition. He was white, haggard, tortured, utterly different from the day when I bade him good-by. I fell on my knees in the mud and stretched imploring arms upward.

"It's I—your father! Don't you know me, Jack?" I cried in a voice I could not recognize as mine.

"We have no fathers!" he retorted bitterly. "And no mothers! We have nobody!"

The light faded away and the night clapped down again upon the trench and its occupants. Weird shapes stumbled past, but my own legs seemed fastened immovably in the mud. I tried to shout but could not. Then a few feet beyond where I stood, I saw by the light of a flare a gap in the parapet where some huge shell had blown it in.

Suddenly, above the tumult, a voice yelled:

"Gas coming! Get your masks!"

I turned helplessly to my guide, trembling with fear. But again he laughed in his mocking way.

"We have no masks!" he answered harshly. "We have no guns nor ammunition! Don't you see that only the Germans are firing? Look through that hole! There are no entanglements—for we have no

“OF SHOES—OF SHIPS——”

wire! There is nothing to keep the boches from rushing us! We have no bombs, no pistols, no rifles! There are no tents nor ambulance hoods—for we have no duck! There are no tools to repair our machinery—and no mechanics! We have no food! We have nothing but our lives, and those are being thrown away, because the people at home are still asleep!”

## IX

### WHAT THE WAR HAS DONE FOR US

"And after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice."

It is a strange thing to come back to New York after an absence of nearly a year to find aeroplanes buzzing overhead, a captured U-boat in Central Park, service-flags covered with stars on every other building, and to bump into one's family doctor on the street-corner in the uniform of a full-fledged major. It is even queerer to have one's wife going afoot to market every morning with a knitting-bag on her arm (camouflaging the pot-roast and chuck steak), and one's daughter hurrying off to a business college to juggle all day with dots, dashes, and pothooks. These things for a returned Wall Street bond-broker are strange indeed—but strangest of all is the new inward and spiritual grace of which they seem to be the outward and visible signs.

The other day I was riding up-town in the local Subway, where for several years I have had an opportunity to study contemporary manners. Up to the time when I left the city ten months ago the male

## WHAT THE WAR HAS DONE FOR US

travellers had consisted of two classes: those who frankly refused to surrender their seats to a woman, and those who strove to hide their incivility by pretending not to see her. I will not state to which I belonged. At Canal Street a middle-aged woman carrying a bundle entered the car. She obviously did not expect to be offered a seat, and had quite naturally annexed a strap, when a young man in uniform arose at the other end of the car and tendered her his place. Before, in her embarrassment, she could either accept or decline it no less than half a dozen passengers nearer her had arisen and offered her their seats. From that moment until the train reached the Grand Central Station there was a contest in politeness going on in that car which rivalled the etiquette of King René at his "Court of Love."

There is a new spirit abroad to which everybody, from the sandwich-man to the railroad president, responds—a spirit of cheerful co-operation. People are more friendly, they are politer, generally more decent. Respect for the uniform has jacked us all up several pegs. It has acted as a moral tonic for the whole country, just as it has for the men who wear it.

We of the cities, at any rate, had become bored with the old-fashioned virtues and callous to the outward observances of gentility. It was fashionable to be cynical. The passion for money-getting in the men of my own class, which had numbed our spiritual fibre,

## THE EARTHQUAKE

had permeated the whole nation, and had engendered wide-spread industrial discontent and jealousy. As I have said, we were drunk with prosperity. Our materialism was a byword among nations—themselves hardly less material.

There had never been so much money anywhere in the world before. To-day skilled labor is still weltering in it. Harvesters and miners ride to work as a matter of course in their own motors. A couple of weeks ago in Miami, Arizona, I counted thirty-three automobiles standing in a row, belonging to workmen, outside the crusher of the Inspiration Mine. In the factory towns the girls spent their money on gloves, laces, and jewelry. There was a growing sexual immorality among the former poorer working class which was now so rapidly becoming well-to-do. Girls who could not buy jewelry and take trips to New York out of their own savings, did so out of the earnings of men. Their ambition was to become movie actresses at fabulous salaries. The "Vamp" was their ideal. Debauchery, eugenics, and degeneracy became common subjects for the screen, the stage, and periodical literature. There was a flood of frankly erotic magazines—*Tough Tales*, *Saucy Stories*, *Naughty Novelettes*, to paraphrase their titles—most of the readers of which were young girls. I saw it myself in my business trips and heard about it from my correspondents and employees. This was the reaction of



## WHAT THE WAR HAS DONE FOR US

the laboring class to the same conditions that plunged the rich into a riot of extravagance and dissipation.

Wealth had had the same effect upon imperial Rome. As Winwood Reade says, referring to the decline of Egypt, in "The Martyrdom of Man": "The vast wealth and soft luxury of the new empire undermined its strength. . . . To the same cause may be traced the ruin and the fall, not only of Egypt, but of all the powers of the ancient world: of Nineveh, and Babylon, and Persia; of the Macedonian Kingdom and the Western Empire. As soon as those nations became rich they began to decay."

Material prosperity, like that of England and America before the war, tends to render nations enervated and corrupt, depriving them of vigor, and making them susceptible to anarchy or other forms of social disease. Certainly civilization in 1914 had reached a state of extravagance and luxury which possibly only war or social revolution could have cured. Indeed, it seems to me that when the sufferings of the war shall be over, and men can look back calmly at the events and conditions that preceded it, it will be seen that not its least dramatic aspect was the sudden ending of the madness which had taken possession of society the world over.

Shane Leslie, treating of social conditions in England just before the war, says: "The English fleet has been aptly compared to the Roman legions cut

## THE EARTHQUAKE

off from a decadent capital, to guard the world from the barbarians. Whether English society was suffering from decay or development, symptoms made their appearance not far different from those which historians tell of the last phase of Roman history. The Colosseum once contained the same crowds of pallid unfit that watched the muddy arenas of English football. A similar indolent and half-educated bourgeoisie loafed in the imperial baths as attended English cricket. In the higher stage of society there was the same revulsion from the old-fashioned virtues and an expressed contempt for whatever belonged to the Augustan, or in the latter case Victorian, age in writing or morals. London churches were deserted for weekend parties exactly as the temples were scorned by the jaded pleasure-seekers of Rome. Nobody in England took the sovereign's defensorship of the faith more seriously than the Romans took the deification of their Emperors. The state religion in London had a less hold on many than the charlatan, the theosophist, and the necromancer, just as Capitoline Jove and the matronly Juno were deserted for the more exciting deities of the East. Socially, women in London exchanged family lockets for immodest charms. . . . The signs were present, even if the decay was not as deep as German sociologists wished to believe. War instantly restored the old stoical and patriotic virtues."

## WHAT THE WAR HAS DONE FOR US

So also in America the year 1914 saw the maximum of demoralization in social life. Periodical literature, often pandering to vice under the guise of teaching morality, reflected the eroticism that in most American cities and in many country towns accompanied the effort to enjoy the sensations of sin while ostensibly lingering inside the pink palings of virtue. All this near-vice and flirtation with immorality was but the echo of what was going on in Europe, where the tide of degeneracy had reached its flood. In London, in Paris, in St. Petersburg, and—I speak without venom—especially in Berlin, the wearied seekers after pleasure, fatigued with the pursuit of Aphrodite, were resorting to exotic pleasures that rivalled those of the pagan civilizations. Not only had the demi-mondaine been made the pattern of fashion, not only did social intercourse savor largely of sexual intrigue, but the ennui of society showed itself in a fever of gambling at cards that rivalled the days of Charles James Fox, and worst of all the spread of the drug habit bid fair to undermine what moral stamina still remained.

All the world was dancing—if dancing it could be called—to the barbaric clash of cymbals and the crash of crockery, and the convolutions of the “tango lizard” to whom the young and temporarily innocent were shamelessly abandoned, would have brought a blush of shame to the bronzed cheek of any self-respecting nautch-girl or voodoo dancer. The search for some-

## THE EARTHQUAKE

thing new resulted in the taking up of all kinds of strange and occult "religions." In New York "The Great Oom" and others of like ilk were pursued by foolish women much as the children of Hamlen town followed after the Pied Piper, some to their lasting degradation; and, as Leslie says, the smart ladies of London crowded the parlors of the clairvoyants and fortune-tellers, and covered themselves with charms and amulets.

The New York hotels were jammed from four o'clock on with turkey and fox trotters, where the tired business man could secure partners without formality, and presumably respectable wives and mothers contested the supremacy of the floor with painted ladies from the shabby sections adjacent to Times Square. Introductions were superfluous. The "thé dansant" of the Broadway hotel was in fact as great a menace to domestic virtue as the "Haymarket" and "Turkish Village" of other days, or the "Ladies' Parlor" of the East Side saloon. At the swagger restaurants and private balls the seminudity of the dancers vied with the suggestiveness of the music, and the pantomime of the dance was accentuated by the breaking of glass and the pounding of tom-toms, assisted by whistles, catcalls, and yells from the orchestra. Any Congo chieftain who inadvertently wandered in would have felt entirely at home. And at the very climax of this crescendo of degeneracy came the distant rumble of

## WHAT THE WAR HAS DONE FOR US

war. The fox-trotters paused in their gyrations, the card-players glanced up apprehensively from the green tables, the *fille de joie* set down with a pale face the glass she had half raised to her red lips.

I do not mean to suggest that vice has been rampant among the men and women I know along upper Fifth Avenue. It hasn't. For the most part they are rich and dull—meticulously respectable. But the license of Broadway and the Tenderloin has been reflected in the entertainment provided for the young and in the extravagance of their elders. We have gorged ourselves with luxury, for we have lacked intellectual and spiritual aspirations. It is trite but nevertheless true that materialism had eaten into our natures, attacking and destroying the sturdier qualities inherited from our fathers. Often, the more respectable people were the most lavish and self-indulgent, for the reason that they had no real vices upon which to spend their money. The eating of elaborate dinners, like the smoking of cigars in the case of many of us men, became the chief end of existence. From the first of January to the end of March, without intermission, adult men and women went night after night, from one house to another, to a succession of costly entertainments where they sat, ate, and talked about little but their amusements from eight o'clock until eleven or twelve. To prepare themselves for the physical strain of these gastronom-

## THE EARTHQUAKE

ical events the women, at any rate, lay in bed until ten or eleven o'clock in the morning, and occupied themselves with trivialities, light literature, motor-ing, and card-playing throughout the day. Had any one suggested that they were leading lives closely akin to barbarism they would have been politely amused.

The most obvious reform that the war has occasioned—and it was to be expected that where the conditions were the worst there the cure would be most pronounced—is the annihilation of class distinction and the reverence for wealth. It has come so swiftly and so easily, the transition is so complete and effectual, that it seems as if all the snobbery that went before must have been a sort of game which we played for the amusement of a few old ladies with our tongues in our cheeks. Wealth has ceased—except when engaging seats at after-theatre cabarets—to have any social significance. In a word, the great God Mammon has fallen flat, face downward in the dead ashes of his own altar.

The old-fashioned fiction of a select circle—Society with a capital “S”—the old Four Hundred—already shattered before the war, has now been blown to atoms—to the universal satisfaction. The conventional dinner with its overloaded table and many guests is no longer “smart” or even correct. Heretofore a few bedizened dowagers have been struggling heroically against the rising tide of common sense to keep

## WHAT THE WAR HAS DONE FOR US

aloft the standard of exclusiveness. Reinforced by the moral effect of some scattering alliances with the genuine European nobility, they have in the past been able to maintain a fictitious social hierarchy. There was a time when some people felt aggrieved if they were not invited to Mrs. Astor's annual ball. To-day nobody is aggrieved at not being invited to anything, partly, to be sure, because they know that there isn't anything to be invited to. They have also suddenly realized that there really isn't anybody in New York or elsewhere who is entitled or qualified to pass on the social status of anybody else in America, where of all places in the world only what a man is, not what he has, should count.

But the old régime has died hard. A scant half-dozen bearded female grenadiers still refuse to surrender, even to the covert laughter of their grandchildren. They are the last surviving members of Society. But they will not survive the war. After it is over, there will never be any Society of that sort again. What social life the *débutante* of 1918 gets will be in the companionship of service. The dancing-men will dance no more. The "pet cats" and "parlor snakes" will all have slunk and wriggled out of sight. The aristocratic families will be those whose men and women have done most for their country, not those whose ancestors "rose from rags to riches." There will be a new order of nobility, and



## THE EARTHQUAKE

our boys instead of becoming coal "barons," steel "kings," or "knights of industry," will be knighted upon the battle-field with the accolade of valor and self-sacrifice.

The day of the gold-plate-rock-crystal-duck-and-champagne dinner is over for a long time to come. We are entering upon an era of social sanity, where display and extravagance will be viewed with disapproval.

The thought of the lavishness of only a year or two ago now fills one with disgust, and even to write of terrapin and Chambertin when the dead bodies of one's fellow beings are rotting in the mud in front of German trenches in Flanders seems trivial and heartless. But it has taken the horror of this frightful carnage to bring people to their senses. Perhaps nothing less would have jarred the self-complacent and comfortable rich into seeing things in their true light. If it has done naught else it has brought about a world-wide readjustment of values. Socialism might have eventually accomplished the same result, but it would have achieved it only after a bitter struggle between classes. We might have had another French Revolution. Now people are doing voluntarily what only the equivalent of the guillotine or the terror of the mob might have forced upon them. Strange that only the red-foamed mares of war, blindness, pestilence, and death, could induce people to live as their own



## WHAT THE WAR HAS DONE FOR US

mental and physical well-being require that they should. For it has not been common sense or economics that has led people to shorten their dinners—it has been the horror of the trenches, the suffering of the wounded in the hospitals, and the cries of the famished children of Belgium. Whatever the reason, let us hope that after the war there will be simply for their own sakes no reversion on the part of the wealthy to their former wastefulness. Let us hope that what the horror of the conflict has led them to abandon they may discard permanently because of the realization that it is a better way to live.

A striking change has taken place in the entire outlook of those who have been heretofore referred to as society women. Hundreds of the ones who up to our entry into the war played bridge morning, afternoon, and night, seemingly with an utter disregard for the responsibilities of life, or spent their time lunching, going to the theatre and opera, or at their milliners and jewellers, have stopped short in their mad race for gayety and excitement, and to-day roll bandages at the same tables where yesterday they played double dummy. The money they threw away gambling at cards they now give to the Red Cross. At the summer resort of Bar Harbor alone *four hundred thousand dressings* were turned out in the three months of July, August, and September, 1917. At the very moment when the city-bred American women seemed at the lowest

## THE EARTHQUAKE

ebb of extravagance, idleness, and self-indulgence, when metropolitan life seemed rotten with the gangrene of materialism and luxury, the shudder of the guns along the western front ran down their spines and roused them to the consciousness that it was up to them to do something. And they have done it—done it as faithfully and perseveringly as their less wealthy sisters. Where they seemed quite mad before they have now become quite sane, and they have taken off their gloves and set to work with a will. Instead of the foolish chatter one has been compelled to listen to in the past, one begins to hear something resembling at least intelligent conversation. They are acutely interested in what is going on in Rome, London, Paris, and Salonika. Women who used to vie with one another in the display of dress and jewels, have put their pearls in the safe. But, most remarkable of all, where they have idled before they now with one accord pass busy days working with their hands.

I believe that the tremendous change in morale observable at the present time in the fashionable woman followed her reassumption of physical effort. Life had become so easy for her that just as she no longer had to use her body she no longer used her mind. She had almost lost the creative instinct. Now that she has begun to use her hands she has started to use her mind again. She has rediscovered the joy of doing, the thrill of physical achievement. She no longer feels

## WHAT THE WAR HAS DONE FOR US

obliged to ring for her maid to perform the trifling service which she can just as well do for herself. And apart from the mere pleasure to be obtained from physical occupation she has learned anew—if, indeed, she had ever learned it before—the joy of service and of sharing with others.

“It is a very wholesome and regenerating change,” says President Wilson, “which a man undergoes when he ‘comes to himself.’ It is not only after periods of recklessness or infatuation, when he has played the spendthrift or the fool, that man comes to himself. He comes to himself after experiences of which he alone may be aware; when he has left off being wholly preoccupied with his own powers and interests, and with every petty plan that centres in himself; when he has cleared his eyes to see the world as it is, and his own true place and function in it.”

It has seemed to me, since my return to America after my long absence of nearly a year, that the President’s words are as apt when applied to a nation as to a man, and that at a time when his concern was with individuals rather than with peoples he may have unconsciously been prophesying the change that was later to take place in the nation of which he was to become the head.

That there has been such a change—a startling and radical one—in the American people is indubitable, and it is no less certain that the war has brought this

## THE EARTHQUAKE

change about. What one bond-broker has observed of this alteration in the life about him, for what it may be worth of encouragement or of warning to his fellow Americans, it has been my purpose—the purpose of John Stanton of — Pine Street, New York City—to record. What is there in fact on the credit side of our spiritual balance-sheet? In the old phrase, let us take a brief account of stock.

It sounds banal, now, to talk about the national conscience. Yet at the time of the sinking of the *Lusitania* I frankly believe that we had ceased to have any. Our grandiose conception of America was of a country too large in territory and enterprise to have any unity in its opinions or policies. That was how the Kaiser thought of us—unless, indeed, he regarded our public opinion as potentially German, which—shades of Dr. Dernberg!—is possible.

We were rather complacently accustomed to point out that, of course, there were so many different types of nationalities constituting the American people that we had no strictly national aims or ambitions except to be left alone—no principles except the particular form of “liberty” which we enjoyed—no doctrines to uphold except the moribund doctrine of Monroe. Indeed, some people went so far, only four or five years ago, as to prophesy more or less publicly that a nation which had so many local interests and prejudices could not permanently remain intact; that the West feared

## WHAT THE WAR HAS DONE FOR US

and distrusted Wall Street, and that the Mississippi formed a natural line of division between what might easily become two separate nations—the Western States of North America and the Eastern. Nobody took this sort of talk seriously, but it reflected something behind it. The West *did* distrust Wall Street. Nobody blames it either. The trouble was that the West thought Wall Street filled a good deal bigger part of the cosmos than it does. But it was enough if Wall Street wanted something for a large part of the country to be opposed to it.

Public opinion was local and divided. As a people we had lost the capacity for moral indignation. This was equally true of most of our larger cities, with the notable exceptions of Boston and Baltimore. That was the situation that confronted President Wilson. But now apathy has given place to patriotism—the West and the East are genuinely one. The son of the New York banker is bunking with the apple-grower's boy from Oregon. You do not hear people talking about the "West" and the "East" any longer—it is all "we" and "us." We have a national consciousness if not a national conscience.

That is looking at it from the "longitudinal" point of view. But there is another that is really more interesting, the "vertical," so to speak. What of the *upper* and the *lower* classes? Imagine the novelist's confusion after the war when he tries to write his

## THE EARTHQUAKE

sociological romance! The aristocracy of wealth and "position" has been utterly swept away and an aristocracy of ability and service substituted in its place. For illustration: a young man of good parts entered a certain Eastern university and although he was an excellent fellow a certain group of his classmates took occasion to make him feel that his social qualifications were not such as to warrant his inclusion into their charmed circle. The war broke out and all enlisted in the same service. In the training-camp these men still pursued their wretched policy of exclusiveness. At the end of a month the object of their contempt had shown such conspicuous qualifications for leadership that he had been put in command of the section to which they were assigned, and was giving them orders. Two weeks later he was given a commission as a captain and sent to France. Another month and he had been cited in the orders for the day for distinguished bravery and coolness—while the youths who had thought themselves too good for him were still marching in columns of fours. This is not fiction, but fact.

To-day the millionaire who isn't giving himself and, at least, a part of his wealth to the service of the nation is not cordially received. He can no longer buy immunity and retain his position in the community. His millions do not count in the scales of sacrifice against the life of the negro bell-hop from the Planter's

## WHAT THE WAR HAS DONE FOR US

Hotel. In the final test it may be that no one of us can keep both his life and his self-respect. If the supreme test of being a gentleman is his willingness to lay down his life for a cause, hereafter whatever form socialism may take there will always be at least a million gentlemen in the United States.

The millionaires are seizing the opportunity to try to justify their existence in this war. Most of them have made good. They read also the signs of the times. Many are becoming frankly socialistic, loud subscribers to the doctrine that nobody should get more than a reasonable profit out of any enterprise. The day of the multimillion fortune is over. Its possessor is to-day busily engaged in making excuses for having it. In many cases if he is too old to volunteer he has gone into the government service.

It is a somewhat quaint experience to sit in a club window with a plutocrat who has spent most of his life in cursing the government and complaining of congressional interference with his business affairs, and listen to him talk about what "we," *i. e.*, the government of which he now forms a part, are going to do. It is equally refreshing to hear a railroad president bewailing the hesitation of the government in taking over control of the railroads. We shall have no more huge fortunes, no more moneyed aristocrats arising out of the artificial soil of special privilege. Hereafter the "upper" class will be composed ex-



## THE EARTHQUAKE

clusively of those who have earned the right to be there.

The war has called a variety of things to our attention. It has taught us the relative "value-in-use" of the different professions. The "saw-bones" has acquired a new dignity. We perceive that the lawyer and the politician, like the broker, is often a parasite. We begin to grasp the importance of the actual producer—the fellow who breeds the cattle and hogs, that plants and harvests the crops and digs the copper and iron out of the earth. The laborer looms large on the horizon. We wonder at the reason for such a myriad of small shopkeepers. We observe with satisfaction that our form of government is sufficiently elastic to enable us not only to carry on a great war without breaking down (legal sharps and political croakers to the contrary), but to make the world safe for democracy by an exhibition of autocracy that might well have astonished Thomas Jefferson. Socialists, republicans, liberals, conservatives, populists, and reactionaries—our Bolsheviki and our Minimalists—are all gratified equally. We have discovered that in some of our legislation we have been trying to bite off the national nose in order to please the political face. We have come to regard as easily mutable institutions that two years ago seemed as firm as the Pyramids. Not only do we not rebel at revolutionary income taxes but we seem to be glad of the chance to pay them.



## WHAT THE WAR HAS DONE FOR US

The wealthy face the probability of a change in their condition with equanimity. It is almost as if they feel that they have had more than enough, and so long as everybody is treated alike they won't mind having less. In fact, the suggestion that the cottages of Newport summer residents should be commandeered for shipyard workers was sympathetically received by their owners. Everybody seems glad to give away his money if only somebody will tell him exactly how to do it.

But, of course, the chief effect of the war has been as a moral stimulant. It has keyed us up to a new interest in everything from life to death, and the best way of living and dying. We had all settled down into the comfortable hypothesis that our old world had at last been shaken pretty definitely into shape. We believed that international and commercial relationships had become so complex that war was an impossibility—a "great illusion," indeed! We had worked down deeper and deeper into our social and spiritual ruts. We were exceedingly comfortable and becoming more so all the time. We argued from fixed premises, based on universal experience since the Franco-Prussian War. The most revolutionary things that we could envisage were new plays, new religions, and new art movements—cubist painting, spiritualism, and Bernard Shaw. Then while the sky was still blue and the sunlight was bright in our eyes the ground shook

## THE EARTHQUAKE

and we were sent sprawling like tenpins. The earthquake toppled over our ancient attitudes and processes of thought and set our spiritual bones to rattling. We were like a lot of comatose clocks all put ticking again. Some ticked faster than others, to be sure, but they all ticked—even those which had never ticked before. A lot of people discovered for the first time that they had real emotions—were really alive—people whose mental and moral works had become so rusty that they had entirely stopped thinking and feeling years ago. The old set phrases about life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness which they had been taught in childhood, and now and again had repeated mechanically, suddenly glowed with a divine fire. Life and liberty became precious possessions—not vague abstractions.

We have had shock after shock. The earthquake has aroused our interest not only in war but in everything else—in geography, hygiene, physics, philosophy, religion, sociology, politics. It has knocked the cobwebs out of our drowsy brains. It has made possible ideas before viewed as almost Utopian and fantastic—woman suffrage, prohibition, the conquest of the depths of the sea and the highest reaches of the air, and governmental control of both. It has made Jules Verne, Kipling, and H. G. Wells seem like very ordinary folk. We speak quite naturally of a “Caproni Limited,” Rome-Fayal-New York, in thirty-six hours as soon

## WHAT THE WAR HAS DONE FOR US

as the war is over. It has made us realize that India and China, Siberia and East Africa, New Zealand and Morocco, Armenia, Arabia, and Egypt exist not merely on lantern-slides or as colored patches on the plates of atlases but are concrete and easily reached places. It has given us new thought for our physical well-being. The health of the nation has improved. It has given us a sense of the adventure of life and the greater adventure of death. We have the feeling of exhilaration that comes from the realization that we are living still on the frontier of the unknown. It has sobered the young and inoculated the old with youth. It has started a new search for religion and evoked a new faith. We dimly perceive the relation of the individual to the cosmos and the trifling value of human life, as compared with the way it should be lived.

It has given a new lease of life to the man who was tired of it because he seemed to be simply "marking time," to the ne'er-do-well and to the failure who have been given an opportunity to retrieve themselves. It has brought out the inherited good qualities in the rich man's son which otherwise would have lain dormant through indolence or complacency. It has given the successful business or professional man his opportunity to become a national figure instead of merely to go on adding to his investments and has taught him that loving favor is better than silver and gold; that true success lies not in what we have but in what we are.

## THE EARTHQUAKE

For many it has done vastly more. Some indeed have been spiritually reborn. And some have died heroically with the allied armies in the bloody slough of France and Belgium, or in the smoke-filled air above it. Of these chivalric men and of those belonging to them I do not speak. For while the nation has "come to itself," while its regeneration has been begun, that regeneration is far from being accomplished.

In gross the national response to the call to arms has been magnificent, even astonishing. We have already contributed six billions of dollars, enlisted seven hundred thousand volunteer soldiers in the Regular Army and the National Guard, constructed thirty-two marvellous cities for our armies in training, outlined and begun the building of ships aggregating over ten million dead tonnage, drafted seven hundred thousand men into service, sent an effective fleet of torpedo-boat destroyers to England, raised a hundred million dollars for the Red Cross and thirty million for the Y. M. C. A., put into operation a complicated system of food administration and conservation, and started a military and naval programme that in two years may rival what it has taken Germany fifty years to perfect. That is tremendous!

The world has never seen anything more heroic than the splendid fashion in which mothers and wives all over the land, with smiles on their faces and songs on their lips, are sending their boys and their young

## WHAT THE WAR HAS DONE FOR US

husbands to the front. We sing no songs of hate on this side of the water—as yet. Let us hope that we never shall and that we can fight out this war in the same spirit that we went into it—to maintain the ideals of humanity, and keep the world a decent and pleasant place to live in.

We can afford to be proud of our volunteers, of our American women, of our fifty thousand buyers of Liberty Bonds, of the clerks, artisans, servants, and trained nurses who have contributed toward the Red Cross, of our rich men and of our poor men who are working together with undivided purpose, of all we have already accomplished and all we are going to do. Yet we must not forget that so far it has been done almost without losing a life, going without a meal, or giving up anything that was really necessary to our comfort.

We have a right to be confident of the sincerity of our patriotism, our generosity, and our courage. But so far what we have accomplished has been done to the waving of flags and to bands playing “Over There—over there—over there!”

The enthusiasm with which we have thrown ourselves into the struggle must not be allowed to beget an undue assurance. We as a people are prone to think that we can do anything. We have an unbounded confidence in the inexhaustible nature of the material resources of our country and its wealth, in the “smart-

## THE EARTHQUAKE

ness" of our business men, the "cleverness" of our inventors, and in the bravery of our youth. We boast that once let our boys get at them and it will be all over with the boches. Some of our soldiers have been ill-advised enough to say to the French in so many words that they have come over to win the war for them. Our enthusiasm is quite American. There is a good deal in Hindenburg's remark that America is the land that produced Barnum. There is something of the "whoop-la!" about it. We are entirely too confident. We have little realization of Germany's tremendous power and malignity. We may need to have the national bumptiousness spanked out of us.

Our enthusiasm is commendable—so long as we are not deceived by our own uproar. As our grandmothers used to warn us, "what's violent isn't lasting." This has got to last. We have been enthusiastic before. We like it. We enjoy the sensation. We were enthusiastic—very—over Admiral Dewey, and we have enthused over others also who in the end likewise wondered why. Enthusiasm is our specialty, like advertising. It is advertising. The "slicker" uniform is unpleasantly ubiquitous. Some of our wives and daughters are less genuinely self-sacrificing than they are enamoured of the mummery of "Heroland," of sitting in costume and becoming veils in Red Cross booths, or rushing around in flag-bedecked motors on Liberty Loan "drives"—the driving being often

## WHAT THE WAR HAS DONE FOR US

only motor driving—of all the little conspicuities that were never permitted them before. Particularly do many of them enjoy being allowed to address the other sex on equal terms without imputation of boldness. For some of the older ones, with whom possible romance is not involved, there is the grateful sense of being one in a great movement, of being busy—even if only moderately where before they were entirely idle, of being somewhat unselfish and of doing a little something for others. It is surprising how much satisfaction of this sort can be extracted from knitting one pair of socks or going without *filet mignon* on odd Thursdays.

This dilettante patriotism is a bad thing for the reason that it comes out like a rash and then frequently goes away. The girl who ought to be boning from five to eight hours a day at shorthand in a business school for ten months, gets more praise and more attention by looking attractive and pretty for a single evening at a Red Cross fair. The bazaar business—the parade of service—the “halo-grabber”—must go. In their place has got to come the realization that the war cannot and will not be won to the braying of brass bands but by going without bread—not by donning becoming clothes but by saving coal and studying household economics—not by doing something we rather enjoy but by giving up something that hurts, such as our automobiles. I say it advisedly; there



## THE EARTHQUAKE

are women in every large city of the United States who could more easily bid good-by to their husbands or their sons, and see them march away in uniform to the sound of the bugle and the cheers of the crowd, than they could give up the luxuries incident to their accustomed way of living; they could better bear a comfortable grief than an uncomfortable household, although the family circle remained intact. But if the war is to be won, the hearth and the larder may both be nearly empty.

We must not forget that there are thousands of Americans, unworthy, to be sure, of the name, who having profited by the war would not be averse secretly to seeing it continue. There are hundreds of thousands whose lives the war has not touched at all. The industrial world is humming and a golden harvest is being reaped by workers and owners, in spite of war-taxes and the Priority Board. The laborer has never known greater prosperity. He is buying pianos, automobiles, hall-clocks, and talking-machines. He is renting the house his superintendent used to occupy. In the cities many of the big hotels have recovered from their first spasm of profit-patriotism, and crowd their menus with the same multitude of elaborate dishes at advanced prices. The waiter serves the officer in uniform with whiskey charged for as "sarsaparilla." I know of a New York man who within a week has bought for his wife a necklace of matched pearls



## WHAT THE WAR HAS DONE FOR US

at the price of five hundred thousand dollars. Private owners are still running acres of greenhouses while the country shivers and our transports are harbor-bound for coal. The fur trade has been booming. Detectives hunt for storehouses in which are "cached" hoards of fuel, sugar, flour, while war millionaires dine their friends in unabated lavishness.

Optimism is prone to confuse what the war has already done with what, if it continues, it may be destined to do. To claim that America's regeneration has been accomplished is to confuse individuals with the nation at large. That is my only criticism of Mr. John Jay Chapman's inspiring article "The Bright Side of the War" in the January (1917) *Atlantic*, where he says:

"It is the great pain which we have passed through, and are still in the midst of, which has opened our eyes and sharpened our ears till we understand many things which were formerly thought to be paradox. Nothing else except pain ever revealed these things to mankind. The world's religious literature has been the fruit and outcome of suffering. Therefore, it is that the meaning of psalm, poem, and tragedy blossoms in the heart of persons who are passing through any great anguish. . . . To-day . . . is an era of prophecy and the prophet, and things are valued in terms of the spirit; Life and Death are viewed as part of a single scheme. The inordinate value set on life during

## THE EARTHQUAKE

periods of prosperity vanished when the hostilities began. The deepest moral mystery of the world, the mystery of sacrifice, was recognized, understood, and acted upon by every one as a matter of course; and a wholesome glow came over humanity in consequence. The average soul was turned right side out for the first time in its experience; and all the forms of 'conversion' with which philosophy has wrestled for centuries were found beside the hearth and in the marketplace."

That is finely put. It is doubtless true of France and of England. It is true of those of us who have in fact suffered; but it is not true of our nation as a whole. The United States has not suffered—yet. Rather we have only declared in clarion tones our willingness to suffer. A "wholesome glow" is ours in consequence, but as a nation of over one hundred millions we are far from having been "turned right side out." That will come—when we have suffered as a people as the other peoples have suffered; it will come after our purification by fire. It would be more just to say that as a nation we had "come to ourselves"—to that realization of our true estate which is the first and essential step in regeneration.

My halting and disconnected record of what the great war has so far done to and for my family, my friends, and myself is finished. The first phase of our experience—the first shock of the earthquake—is over.

## WHAT THE WAR HAS DONE FOR US

For the moment America pauses, holding her breath, waiting to see whether peace may come, or whether the armies of the West will once more hurl themselves against one another with unabated determination and ferocity. So I, too, pause and lay down my pen, for what is to come no man may know.

Already the war has taken toll of millions of lives. Its material cost is beyond the hazard of the economist. Hereafter history will date not only from the Christian era but also from the crucifixion of Belgium. Yet often I feel that most of us are as oblivious of what is transpiring as the workaday inhabitants of Jerusalem were two thousand years ago of the sacrifice upon the Mount of Olives.

For three years the youth of the world has poured out its blood, dying that humanity—that we—might be saved. Were we worth saving? Are we worth saving? If we were not, if we are not, may their sacrifice not make us so—in spite of ourselves? For I now believe that the regeneration of the world began with the defense of Belgium—and that in this coming regeneration America is included. On the borders of that little country Might and Right—Paganism and Christianity—faced one another. Humanity—liberty—democracy hung in the balance. The Hun with his sword at her throat offered her life in return for honor. Calmly—with full knowledge of the consequences—the choice was made and Belgium was cruci-

## THE EARTHQUAKE

fied upon the Calvary of Self-sacrifice. She could save others, herself she could not save.

We must be ready to do no less than little Belgium. I am confident that we are prepared to do it, yet I fear that we do not realize what we may be called upon to undergo. We do not as a people understand the infamy of Germany's treacherous tongue and brutal sword. We do not grasp the significance of President Wilson's declaration that we cannot treat with the military descendants of the Teutonic Knights. For this is a struggle for existence between the gospel of terror and that of humanity, between barbarism and civilization, between tyranny and liberty, between a cruel and merciless paganism and the teachings of Jesus Christ.

It is a struggle that can know no compromise. "So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty. For he shall have judgment without mercy that hath showed no mercy. . . ."

Should we falter in our duty and for the sake of our lives or of our comfort enter into an inconclusive peace we should condone murder, betray our allies, and abandon those who have died fighting for that liberty whose torch America still holds aloft for the world to see. We shall not fail, but we shall be sorely tried.

"And, behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and broke in pieces the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the

## WHAT THE WAR HAS DONE FOR US

wind; and after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice. . . . And the Lord said. . . . And it shall come to pass, that him that escapeth the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay; and him that escapeth from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay. Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him.”

1996













LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 020 914 142 5